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TRACTARIANISM TESTED

BY

HOLY SCRIPTURE

AND

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

IN A

Series of Sermons.

BY

HUGH STOWELL, M.A.,

INCUMBENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, MANCHESTER; AND HON.

PREBENDARY OF CHESTER.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1845.

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TO THE RIGHT REVEREND
THE LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

My LORD,

IT is very pleasant to me to have an opportunity of thus publicly recording my veneration for your character, and my gratitude for the friendship with which you favour me. You have given a fresh proof of that friendship by allowing these volumes to appear under the sanction of your name. Their only claim to such sanction is, that they are a hearty though humble effort to vindicate those truths and uphold that church which you have so nobly vindicated and upholden. The former you have done with no less wisdom than faithfulness, no less power than kindness; the latter you have done not so much by your pen and your tongue

as by your life and your labours. The state of the diocese of Chester, the churches which have been built there since you have presided over it, the schools which have been established, the faithful pastors who have been multiplied, the moral and religious improvement of the population, the harmony and efficiency of the whole ecclesiastical machinery under your care,—these are the most eloquent evidences of your churchmanship—these the surest seals of your episcopate. To crown all, instead of the language of self-gratulation, I know the language of your heart to be, “not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give the praise!” Long may He who has enabled you to be what you are, and to do what you have done, strengthen you, “both outwardly in body and inwardly in soul,” for the good of his church, and the honour of his name! —Such, my Lord, is the prayer of myriads of your countrymen, and of none more heartily than of

Your grateful, respectful, and affectionate
Friend and servant,

HUGH STOWELL.

Manchester, Sept. 7, 1845.

P R E F A C E.

THE design of this Preface is simply to state the circumstances which gave rise to the following discourses, and the view with which they were first preached and are now published. I was induced to undertake the course in consequence of the spirit of inquiry on certain points, some of them theological and others ecclesiastical, which had been stirred up in the minds of many of my flock by the controversies which agitated, and still, unhappily, agitate the church. On some of those points I found that their information was scanty, on others that their opinions

were unformed, and on not a few that their judgments were unsettled. They had not embraced error, yet they were not sufficiently grounded in truth. My object, therefore, was not so much to grapple with false doctrine, as to define, illustrate, and enforce sound doctrine. Hence, these sermons will be found to be less controversial and more practical than their title might seem to indicate. In the first instance I did not contemplate publication; indeed my active engagements are such as to make it almost presumptuous in me to attempt it; but so many of my hearers importuned me to publish—at the same time offering to secure the services of a masterly short-hand writer to take down my discourses, —that I did not feel I should be justified in withholding their wishes. The report furnished to me was very correct, and I have spared no pains, so far as my incessant occupations would allow me, to make it fit for the press; still I am painfully conscious that the work has many imper-

fections, and that unfriendly criticism may find much in it to expose. But if it should place in the hands of honest inquirers, especially of my own flock, a compendious digest of information and argument on subjects which are almost sure to exercise their minds, and if it should help, through the good hand of God, to guide them into sound and moderate views, alike remote from laxity and bigotry, I shall be pleased and thankful; nor will the critic's lash embitter my pleasure, or abate my thankfulness.

From one fault at least I trust these pages are exempt—anything of personal unkindness towards those whose opinions I have felt called upon to blame. Should I, however, have inadvertently transgressed in this respect, I most heartily crave their forgiveness. “ My heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is, that they may be saved.”

It only remains for me to add, that, “ if the Lord will,” I hope to publish the

second volume of discourses in the beginning of next year; and that I commend the work to Him, without whose blessing the ablest efforts cannot avail, and with whose blessing even mine shall not be in vain.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

1 THESS. v. 21.—Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” PAGE 1

SERMON II.

THE STANDARD OF FAITH.

JOHN xx. 30, 31.—And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name 49

SERMON III.

APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION AND THE POWERS OF
THE CLERGY.

MATT. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.—And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world. Amen.

116

SERMON IV.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE REFOR-
MATION.

JEREMIAH vi. 16.—Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. . . . 184

SERMON V.

HOW SEPARATISTS ARE TO BE REGARDED.

MARK ix. 38, 39.—And John answered him saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us : and we forbad

him because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not ; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me 230

SERMON VI.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING.

2 TIM. iv. 1, 2.—I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom ; preach the word 269

SERMON VII.

ON RESERVE IN THE COMMUNICATION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

ACTS xx. 26, 27.—Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God 301

S E R M O N S.

SERMON I.

PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

1 THESS. v. 21. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

We must prove the opinions which we embrace, if we would hold them fast when we have embraced them. Those who gather up their religious sentiments lightly, are sure to hold them loosely, likely to change them easily, and almost certain to be deceived. That such should be the conduct of the heedless multitude who have nothing of Christianity save the

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name, is more sad than strange ; but it is startling to find how many there are, earnest in their piety yet unsettled in their views ; persons of whose sincerity you cannot have a misgiving, and yet of whose orthodoxy you may justly stand in doubt. They have gleaned their notions of divine truth they scarcely know how, and they have never so substantiated them as to change them into principles. Vagueness and indefiniteness characterize their creed ; and were they required to give an account of, or a reason for, the faith that is in them, they would find themselves utterly at sea. On such minds, controversy respecting the principles of the Gospel, however much such controversy is generally to be deprecated, may indirectly at least exert a salutary influence. It may force them to authenticate what they have hitherto taken on credit, and no longer to substitute unreflecting credulity for enlightened faith. The tree which has wrestled with the winds will become the most deeply and

firmly rooted, and the mind which has struggled hard in attaining to the faith which through grace it enjoys, will ordinarily prove the most constant, consistent, and unmoved in that faith.

It is therefore, Christian Brethren, not so much for the purpose of withstanding what is false, as of defining and consolidating, (so far as God and his word shall enable me,) certain truths, some of them fundamental and others important though they may not be essential; truths, which in every period of the church have been specially subjected to perversion and debate; respecting which the Church of Rome has fearfully not to say fatally gone astray, and about which, ever since the Reformation, our own church has frequently been disturbed, and never more so than at the present juncture. It is in the hope of grounding and establishing the minds of my flock in these truths, that I enter on the present somewhat unwonted series of discourses. I need scarcely remind

you that there are those, ostensibly within the pale of our church, who have made themselves unenviably singular by the way in which they have agitated afresh the topics to which we are calling your attention ; to such lengths have they gone, that their views have assumed a systematic form, and are popularly designated "Tractarianism." And since I look upon those views as in many respects sorely erroneous ; since they have spread widely through the bosom of our church, advocated as they are with much skill, enforced with much learning, and endorsed with much apparent saintliness of character in those who propagate them ; and since no one can be blind to the effect which they have had in disquieting, and unfixing the minds of many who are anything but disposed to embrace them, surely it is my part and duty as a spiritual watchman who desires to be found faithful, to endeavour so to grapple with these false doctrines, and so to vindicate the truths which

they disfigure, that my people being rooted and grounded in the faith, and having their minds fully assured, may not be “tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head even Christ.” Nor need the minister of our church who feels called upon to discharge his conscience in this matter, fear lest he should be departing from the tenor of his commission in so doing; for one of the solemn questions addressed to him at his ordination was, “Will you be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s word?” and his answer to that question was, “I will, the Lord being my helper.” Neither need he look far for high precedents to shelter him, since eighteen bishops of our church have

felt called upon to enter their official protest, more or less broadly, against the "antiquated novelties" to which we refer. Amongst these prelates our own beloved diocesan has distinguished himself by his noble stand in defence of the truth. Shielded by such precedents and in discharge of so solemn a pledge, given in the most solemn hour of my clerical life, I cannot be charged with needlessly stepping out of the ordinary course of pastoral ministrations, in thus directing your minds to the contemplation of several leading truths in their antagonistic aspect towards certain mischievous and prevalent errors. In doing so however, I trust in God that I shall be enabled to exercise all charity, meekness, and forbearance. With this end in view, I shall avoid, as little in harmony with this hallowed place and day, bringing forward to any extent erroneous citations from the writings of those whose errors I feel called upon to combat; but should I

hereafter reduce this course of instruction to a more permanent shape, I pledge myself that then careful reference and sufficient quotation shall be supplied.

Our subject for this evening, as preliminary to the series of topics which we have selected, is the subject commonly styled—"Private Judgment." It is clear that this point is preliminary, because if it be not lawful for us to exercise on theological matters the reason with which God has endued us, then we are neither qualified nor authorized—at least the laity are not—to grapple at all with the subjects at issue; our preaching is vain, and your hearing is likewise vain. All that belongs to you is blind submission to that which is decided for you by the church, or, to speak more correctly, by the authorized ministers of the church, or, to come to the practical upshot, by the clergyman who is your spiritual overseer. The right therefore, or rather the duty of Private Judgment occupies the threshold

of religious inquiry. Suffer us then to bespeak your earnest and patient attention, whilst we strive to illustrate and establish that right and duty, from holy Scripture ; whilst we make it plain that they are recognised and sanctioned by our beloved church ; whilst we show how they have been assailed and infringed upon by Tractarian writers, and whilst we guard the assertion of the right and the discharge of the duty from the extravagances into which they are apt to run.—And may God by his Holy Spirit so make ready our minds and open our hearts, that we may see and receive the truth with meekness and pure affection, and be strengthened, established, quickened in our holy faith !

Much as we hear of Private Judgment, we rarely hear any precise definition of what is meant by the expression. It seems needful therefore, that we should set out with defining what we intend by the phrase. Private judgment then, is the individual exercise of understanding

and conscience in the investigation, approval, and reception of divine truth, with supreme dependence on the Spirit of God as the guide, and the word of God as the rule, by which we are to be directed ; use being at the same time made of all such aids as God has appointed. Now, that man has a right, nay that he is bound, thus to exert his rational powers is little less than a self-evident truth ; for if God has entrusted these powers to every man, is not every man under a consequent obligation to improve the trust ? To fail to do so is to be unfaithful in his stewardship. Those powers, let it be borne in mind, are not essentially evil, however they have been weakened, perverted and depraved ; they enriched man in his primitive innocence, yea, they were the dignity and ornament of his soul. Must they then, in order to our restoration to the divine favour and likeness, be crushed or set aside ? Are they not rather to be rectified, braced, illumined, fitted again to serve the high purposes

which their Author designed them to answer? Strip man of the use of these faculties, and do you not strip him of his free agency and moral accountability? For if he must blindly and unquestioningly bow to the decisions of others in matters of faith and practice, he becomes acted upon not self-acting, a machine rather than an agent, the mere instrument of man rather than the rational servant of God. Does not reason itself teach us that as "every one of us must give account of himself to God," must stand unrepresented and alone at the judgment-seat, must personally answer for what he has believed as well as for what he has done, so ought every man to search for himself, judge for himself, believe for himself, and obey for himself? Personally he must be saved, or personally he must perish; ought he not then personally to decide his faith? And as to moral agency so to reasonable faith, the exercise of private judgment is indispensable. When faith ceases to be

rational it ceases to be reasonable. Blind faith is unworthy of the name of faith ; it ought rather to be called fond credulity or drivelling superstition. He who cannot give a reason for the faith no less than for the hope that is in him has not the faith of an intelligent being. Nor will it avail to answer that there are depths in revelation which reason cannot gauge ; because, however much there may be revealed which is beyond, there is nothing revealed which is contrary to enlightened understanding.

But it is time that we take our stand on higher ground than natural reasoning can supply : we make our appeal to the great decisive standard by which every question in Christianity ought to be determined. And in the outset, we fearlessly assert that the whole tone and tenor of holy Scripture favours the exercise of individual understanding in the investigation and acquirement of heavenly wisdom. Throughout the sacred writings there is a manifest

adaptation to the minds of mankind at large; they address themselves to the whole human family, they make their appeal to no one class, no privileged portion of our race; with them as with their author, “there is “no respect of persons.” Instead of singling out the hierarchy as alone to be initiated into their mysteries, or directing their voice to the corporate body exclusively, they rather lodge their appeal with individual conscience and make their address to every heart. But if men are thus personally addressed by the word of God, is it not meet to infer that they ought, so far as they have opportunity and power, personally to heed, appropriate and apply the things so addressed to them by their Creator, Redeemer, and Judge?

Nor are there wanting in the Bible explicit recognitions and enforcements of the duty for which we are contending. In the Old Testament, God upbraided his people because whilst “the stork, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swal-

low, observe the time of their coming, his people knew not the judgment of the Lord." It was their fault therefore, that neglecting to use their reason, they become more senseless than the fowls of heaven. To the same effect is the complaint which God made by the prophet Isaiah, not simply against the prophets and the priests but against the whole nation ; " The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Is not the very sin with which God here charges them the want of reasoning and reflection ; that they were become more brutish than the ox or the ass ? Were they not then bound to know and understand, and was not their reason challenged by him who gave it ?

In the New Testament Scriptures passages of the same import meet us again and again. Christ, when rebuking the Pharisees and Sadducees, thus upbraided them : " O ye hypocrites, ye can discern

the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" And again he added, "Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" St. Paul repeatedly lodges his appeal with the reason of those whom he addresses. As when he says to the Corinthians, "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say." So in the epistle to the Romans, he urges that in doubtful matters every man should "be fully persuaded in his own mind;" laying it down as a moral axiom, that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" and surely this principle must apply to doctrinal truth as well as to christian conduct; and if so, how completely is it in the face of every attempt to shift responsibility from the individual to the body; to merge personal judgment and conscience in the corporate judgment and conscience of the church. The passage on which this discourse is founded greatly strengthens our argument: "Prove all things;" no opinion, no observance, but

you ought to test it; and when you have so tested it, then—"hold fast that which is good;" not "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," but, having felt carefully, grasp firmly, and hold to the death. In like manner, how often does the apostle challenge a response from the secret witness to the truth which God has lodged in the breast of every man. He declares of himself and his fellow-labourers, that by manifestation of the truth they "commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." It was not, therefore, by mere authority of office, nor yet by evidence of miracle, but likewise by demonstration of the truth to individual consciousness in the sight of the Searcher of hearts, that he carried home conviction to all. There is another declaration of the apostle still more emphatically decisive on the point in debate. "If," says he, when warning the Galatians against the false apostles, who strove to

corrupt them from the simplicity that is in Christ, “ if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Is it not here assumed distinctly, that the saints in general were not only competent but bound to compare teachers and their teaching with that faith which had once for all been delivered to them—that faith which is now delivered to us in the written word ; and should they find them at variance with that decisive standard, to reject them utterly, even though the false herald were one of the very apostles who had aforetime proclaimed to them the gospel, or an angel that had come down from the courts above ? Could language be stronger, or proof of the duty of judging all things by the word of God, more incontrovertible and plain ? Scarcely less striking are the words of St. John, when writing to the elect lady and her children, “ whom he loved in the faith,” respecting the doctrine of Christ, he charges them,

“ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.” Hence it appears, that even a christian female, having her “ senses exercised to discern good and evil,” is entitled and required to distinguish between false doctrine and true.

To these accumulated evidences from the word of truth, we might add a multiplicity of passages in proof that the investigation of the inspired page is incumbent upon all. A few must suffice. The Saviour himself thus exhorted the Jews, “ Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.” It is recorded to the honour of the Bereans that “ they were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Lovely union of meek reverence in hearing with honest freedom in

ascertaining the truth! Whence sprang, not fond credulity, but intelligent faith. To the mind of Timothy it was recalled as one of his choicest privileges, that "from a child he had known the holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

In sweet harmony with the accents of scripture is the voice of our scriptural church. She lays it down as a fundamental canon for her children, that "whatsoever is not read in holy scripture nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." And in the same catholic spirit, she teaches them to pray, that they "may in such wise (not only hear and read all holy scriptures but) mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of God's holy word they may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of

everlasting life which he has given them in our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Deeply does it concern us so to pray in the exercise of our understandings on the truth of God ; for, as we have already premised, it is most essential, in order to become wise unto salvation, that we should depend simply and supremely on the spirit of God to illumine and guide us. Without that guidance and illumination, our reason perverted even as our heart is depraved by sin, will prove no safer lamp than the meteor of the marsh which gleams on the path of the nightly wanderer only to mislead him, and misleads him but to betray. *We want infallibility in the knowledge of the things that belong to our peace.* How many are sensible of the want who utterly fail of the *remedy*, who grasp the shadow and miss the reality ! The grand reason why thousands are disposed to listen complacently to the fiction of an infallible earthly judge of scripture and controversy is the fact, that

they find such endless contradictions and fearful uncertainty rendering the nominally christian world even upon points confessedly fundamental. They are staggered at this state of things, and they fancy that there must be some unerring mode of determining what is truth. In accordance with such feelings, the Church of Rome has set up her infallible head; whilst many who too closely symbolize with her would fain exalt their own notion of a Catholic interpretation into a kind of traditionary infallibility, which is to decide the sense of scripture and bind upon all believers unquestioning submission. But it must strike the simple student of the Bible, that both these parties overlook a great distinctive characteristic of the truth as it is in Jesus, even that it is taught effectually, not by man but by God, not by ordinances nor by the word alone, but by the Holy Ghost, with demonstration and with power. No doctrine is more clearly laid down in holy Scripture than this doc-

trine. We are constantly taught that except we have the Spirit of God, we cannot rightly, unerringly, and savingly understand and receive the word of life. Nor is it less clearly revealed, that such divine teaching is not merely vouchsafed to the church in her corporate capacity, so that the truth shall never fail in the midst of her, nor the gates of hell prevail against her, as some would limit the blessing; nor yet exclusively to the clerical order, as though they were to monopolize the inestimable benefit, and dole it forth to others at their will; but that it is equally competent as it is indispensable for every man to whom the word of salvation comes, to receive, enjoy and follow the Spirit of truth. All this can be substantiated by passage upon passage. That man cannot of himself, by the exercise of his own unaided and unrectified powers attain, comprehend, and believe the truth, St. Paul thus unequivocally avers: "The natural man," (man unrenewed in the spirit of his mind,)

“savourereth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Again he lays it down as an axiom in the science of salvation, that “no man can say (believingly and experimentally) that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.” No less decisive than this language are the words of our blessed Saviour himself: “Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Except a new, a preternatural life be imparted to him by the Holy Ghost, he can neither discern nor appropriate the kingdom of God; in other words, he can neither understand nor be made partaker of the salvation of the gospel. These quotations are too explicit to need any addition.

That divine teaching is promised to all, and ought to be sought and expected by all—by every *individual* Christian—is with the same plainness witnessed by Holy

Scripture. The prophet Isaiah foretold it as a choicest privilege of the times in which we live, that the Spirit should be so largely outpoured upon the church, that “all her children should be taught of God.” Now, that individual teaching is intended by these words our blessed Redeemer made perfectly clear, when grounding his doctrine on this very promise, he declared—“*Every one*, therefore, that heareth and learneth of the Father cometh unto me.” Still more emphatically, if possible, is the same truth revealed in the prophecy of Jeremiah, in those memorable words adduced by St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as having their accomplishment in these latter days. Foretelling the new covenant which He would make with His people, the Lord said—“This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. And they shall teach no

more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Could language be more explicit? Every one of the children of God, from the babe to the father in Christ, it is covenanted shall know the Lord; because the Lord himself will inwardly instruct them, insomuch that, comparatively speaking, they shall have no need of human instruction, because they shall have as their instructor Him to whom alone infallibility belongs. Of the man so taught, St. Paul assures us, that he "judgeth all things." Neither is there respect of persons with the great teacher of the saints. He manifests no partiality to the intellectual or the learned. No promises are more unrestricted than the promises of his manifold gifts of grace; witness that blessed assurance of our Lord's—" If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much

more will your heavenly Father give his holy Spirit to them that ask him!" Mark also the testimony of the apostle James—" If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." And to pass by a multiplicity of kindred passages, how decisive is the language of the disciple whom Jesus loved, when addressing in his Catholic epistle the entire body of the faithful, he says—" But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." But more than this, the unlearned and the simple have not unseldom the advantage of the gifted and the erudite, in becoming wise unto salvation; for it is the moral disposition not the mental power which the divine teacher regards. Hence the Redeemer, when he rejoiced in spirit,

said, “ I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” For the same reason he assured us that “ whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein ;” and that “ if any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.” Many a time have we seen it verified, that “ the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him : and he will show them his covenant ;”—that “ the meek will he guide in judgment : the meek will he teach his way.” We have seen the wayfaring man, though a fool, when led by the Spirit of God, treading in liberty and peace the narrow way that leadeth to life ; whilst the powerful reasoner, the subtle critic, the elaborate theologian, led by his own spirit, was entangled in mazes from which he could not emerge and wandered far off from the path of peace.

In this connexion, we cannot forbear adding, that the infallibility in what is essential to salvation, which the Holy Ghost secures to every believer, is the only conceivable infallibility which can avail fallen man. For infallibility in the human teacher could not insure infallibility in the human learner. So that were the Roman pontiff, yea, were every authorized minister, endued with the awful attribute, of infallibility, what guarantee should we have that he would not be misapprehended and misconstrued by his disciples? Nay, verily, would not oral teaching, however infallible, be more liable to misconception than the written word of God? There can, therefore, be no effectual infallibility for the Christian but that which is found in His teaching who teaches inwardly as well as outwardly, who, whilst he opens the heart to receive, preserves the reason from misunderstanding the truth of God.

We are well aware that many plausible objections are brought against the mode

of determining truth which we have striven to establish. We are told that every heretic and fanatic may pretend that his judgment is swayed by the Spirit of God; and, consequently, that the principle which we have asserted would throw wide the flood-gates for the wildest enthusiasm. To this, however, we unhesitatingly reply, that a safeguard against such abuse of the doctrine is furnished in the fact which has been fully proved, that it is in and by the Holy Scriptures themselves that the divine Spirit guides into truth. So that it is not by any immediate revelation to the mind that he imparts to a man the wisdom which cometh from above, but by shining with and through his own holy word into the heart, thus qualifying the latter to receive the former and bringing home the former "in power and in much assurance."

Will it, then, be further contended that such is the obscurity and extent of the Bible, that by referring men directly to

this standard, we place them in sore jeopardy of error, whereas some short catholic summary of the chief doctrines of revelation would greatly facilitate the attainment of truth. We answer, where is such summary to be found? If it be replied, in the universal consent of the church,— where is that universal consent digested and recorded? If it be said in our creeds, these we receive, not simply because the church has so long received them, but because they can be proved by sure warranty of holy Scripture. But if we be referred to the general teaching of the fathers, we demand, Is a man embarked on a course more clear and defined when you launch him on the ocean of the fathers than when he glides along that pure river of the water of life the word of the living God? But to enlarge on this topic would be to trench on the subject for our next discourse, and therefore we forbear.

“ Interpretation, however, you must

have," (it will still be argued,) if not the church's interpretation, the interpretation of the individual student of holy Scripture; and whether of the twain is likeliest to be right? Against such reasoning we indignantly reclaim. The use of the word interpretation in this connexion is an insult to the Bible. We interpret what is enigmatical, we understand what is plain. The word of God is not a "system of hieroglyphics," nor a collection of dark sayings, that it should need interpretation; the great proportion of it is as simple in style as it is sublime in import. A lowly mind, therefore, whilst hearing or searching the inspired record, in dependence on the Spirit of God, does not interpret but understand; and it will generally be found, that the meaning which presents itself first to such a mind, is the meaning which was intended to be conveyed. When men begin to interpret what is plain, it is usually because they wish to darken it; desire, not to receive the sense which it offers to

their minds, but to force it to bear the sense which accords with their prejudices or their purposes.

Still, the strongest position occupied by the opponents of private judgment is found in the practical results which they ascribe to that principle. Why, they triumphantly ask, such strange diversity of nations, such a chaos of schisms and sects, all professing to take Scripture for their guide, and most of them claiming to be influenced by the Spirit? It cannot be denied, that in semblance at least, this is the most formidable objection which can be brought against the working of the principle which we advocate. Let it be allowed us, then, to grapple with it more fully than with any other. In the outset, we contend that the evils so studiously set forth, spring largely from the inaction rather than the exercise of private judgment. Nothing is more common than for the very men who talk most loudly of their right to judge for themselves, who are

most sensitive of any invasion of that right, and who plume themselves most on their uncompromising maintenance of it, to be at the same time regardless of the weight of responsibility which it entails, and altogether neglectful of the consequent duty which they ought to discharge. It feeds their vanity and serves their purpose to be champions for the right, but when they come to the duty, the self-denying, painful, toilsome duty, of striving after "a right judgment in all things," then they would fain be excused. Vehe-
ment for the shadow, they are indifferent about the substance. Hence they are heady, rash, and intolerant, where they ought to be lowly, deliberate, and charitable. Were there less assertion of the right and more accomplishment of the duty of forming a sound judgment in the things of God, this would be one great step towards the unity and uniformity for which so many sigh,—intelligent union and uniformity, result-
ing from the use, not the sacrifice, of our

minds, resembling the cohesion, through magnetic power, of particles in the crystal, not the inert combination of heterogeneous materials frozen into one mass in the iceberg. Is it from the exertion or the supineness of their judgment that so many cleave with such unreasoning tenacity to the errors in which they have been educated—that so many are hurried away by names and pretensions, so many led blindfold by the bold pretender, by the successful leader of a party? Such is the mental slothfulness which belongs to us, such our absorption in the things of time, and such our insensibility to the objects of eternity, that the grand difficulty is not to restrain men in the exercise of their judgments, but to stimulate them to the free, honest, truthful discharge of the duty.

A further and fruitful occasion of the ceaseless divisions that disgrace so many who lay claim to the name of Protestant, is the unwarranted and unsanctified em-

ployment of their understandings in the things of the Spirit. They search for truth in fond confidence of their own competency to find it, in the vain conceit of their own wisdom. They think to master the truths of revelation as they master the truths of natural science, by the force of their reasons. Their utter dependency on the Spirit of God in order that they may know the things of God is not realized. This is a cardinal error—as though the seaman should take the meteor of the night instead of the polar star to pilot him! “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble,” and no pride does he more resist than intellectual pride—the very pride of Satan. The lively oracles of God will never disclose their heavenly secrets to him who thinks to force from them their responses, but into the lowly heart they will breathe their lessons of saving wisdom. To be studied to purpose, holy Scripture must be studied as itself prescribes, and, as we have already made

abundantly clear, it contains no truth more manifest than this, that no one can be guided into the knowledge of the things of the Spirit, except the Spirit lead him, and that they are the meek, and the meek only, whom he will guide in judgment. It is virtually written over the doorway of the temple of inspiration—"If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise." Oh, were there more of the exercise of our understandings in the word of God after this godly sort, how much more should we see "eye to eye" even in this twilight of our heavenly day! How much more should we all "speak the same thing" and "think the same thing!" As surely as truth is one, the standard of divine truth one, the infallible teacher of divine truth one—such and so blessed must be the result.

We would not, however, be understood to maintain that perfect oneness of mind is to be anticipated much as it ought

to be coveted, amongst the children of God in their earthly state of pupilage. Diversity of opinion in a greater or less degree is a necessary condition of our present imperfection. "Now we see through a glass *darkly*," and by consequence, in some measure, *differently*. We can no more look for unshaded light than we can for unspotted purity, in this infancy of our immortality. It cannot be but that some must have a more strong and some a more feeble spiritual vision, and they "who are strong, ought to bear the" mental no less than the moral "infirmities of the weak;" nor do the imperfections and varieties of knowledge in the faithful any more disprove the reality of the Spirit's teaching in their minds than do the imperfections and different degrees of their holiness disprove the reality of his sanctifying work in their hearts. But, as in all that have been renewed by the Holy Ghost the same distinctive moral lineaments are found,

whether more faintly or more fully developed, identifying the whole “household of faith;” so in all that have been enlightened by the same Spirit will there be found a unity of mind in the great essential truths of “the faith once delivered to the saints.”

Here we pause a little for the purpose of addressing ourselves to the sad task of showing how little in harmony with the voice of holy Scripture and our church, on the subject of our discourse, are the sentiments of the Tractarian writers. One of their leading organs thus writes: “To give up the one sense of Scripture which the church teaches, is ultimately almost to give up the light of revelation itself, and to reduce man again to the guidance of natural reason; for though it leaves a divine book in his hands, it refers him entirely to human reason for the explanation of it. The words he reads are heavenly, but the sense he fixes on them

is the result of the mere exercise of his natural powers of mind. He wants the dogma, *the church's traditional divinely inspired sense of the Bible to make it really a revelation to him.** Does Rome herself more effectually lock up the Bible from the minds of the people than this principle fairly carried out would inevitably do? Or does even she more profanely cast out of sight the teaching of the Spirit assured to every believer? In a number of the same periodical, we have the following summary of a christian man's belief: "So long as men are content to receive the Bible in its *authorized sense*, so long the system of revelation stands firm and unshaken. One creed, one definite belief is necessary: they receive that one belief *because the church offers it them*. The whole process of believing being comprised in one single act of acceptance, the work is finished as soon as it is begun.

* British Critic, for April 1842, p. 481.

Before inquiry can have commenced, the man is already a believer, and therefore inquiry as the means of discovering truth, is prevented, anticipated, cut off; it does not enter into the system. But once introduce inquiry, as the ground of belief, as the means of arriving at truth, and you cannot limit its office or its operation.”*

To the same effect a chief oracle of the Anglo-Romish school declares “her children (our church’s) are to receive her expositions, and obey her decrees, and accept her authority in controversies of faith:—and the appeal lies not to their private judgment; they are not the arbiters, whether she pronounce rightly or no.”† Here is indeed a compendious method of attaining to the faith. All that a man needs is unreflecting submission. He must say with the blindest dupe of Rome, “I believe what my church believes”

* British Critic, for April 1842, p. 488.

† Dr. Pusey’s Letter, p. 30.

and simply “because she believes it.” He who consents thus to sacrifice his understanding rivets a chain round his spirit the last link of which he puts into the hand of the priesthood and he becomes the veriest slave. How these notions jar with the testimony of Scripture we have fully shown ; and no less harshly do they clash with the decisions of our scriptural church. So far is she from arrogating to herself such irresponsible authority, from “lording it over God’s heritage,” that she modestly affirms in her twentieth Article—“It is not lawful for the church, to ordain any thing that is contrary to God’s word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the church be a witness, and a keeper of holy writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation.” How

lowly and lovely this language ! Would to God, that all the sons of our church breathed her spirit and took her tone !

Unhappily, we might accumulate passages of the same unsound character as those which we have adduced from the writings of men who call themselves churchmen, but we rather hasten to a more grateful and useful task—the inculcation of some cautions and restrictions with which we ought to use our judgments in the things of the Spirit. Here we are most wishful not to be misunderstood, lest haply it should be supposed that in maintaining our right to judge for ourselves, we are advocating or abetting that insubmissiveness of spirit, that contempt of all authority, that senseless self-opinionatedness, which many imagine to be the essence of private judgment. He who commanded us to “prove all things” has ordained certain means and appliances to assist us in doing so, and fatally astray is the judgment of that man who

dares to despise these ordinances. God has ordained the fellowship of his church, the preaching of his word, the solemn assembly, the reception of his holy sacraments; he has appointed the instruction of the children by the parent, the ignorant by the enlightened, and the youthful by the aged. Far, far be it from us to entertain any vain notions of the right of private judgment which would tend to the disparagement of these divine institutions, which would lead the child to set at nought the opinions of his father, the hearer of his authorized pastor, or the friend of his more matured and saintly friend. *Christian* private judgment does not consist in a man's contemning every opinion but his own; far from it: it rather requires that we should give due weight to evidence of whatever kind; and, with the inexperienced and unlearned more especially, wisdom, character, authority, holiness, antiquity, in a body or in individuals, ought to weigh heavily; not

indeed, producing uninquiring submission, but commanding respectful deference. We are persuaded, therefore, that it has not been the use but the abuse of individual judgment, which has caused so many to abandon the church of our land. We cannot doubt that the wholesome exercise of his reason would always lead a man cautiously to receive and reluctantly to entertain any objections against the principles in which he had been nurtured, principles which he finds to have been held by so many of the holiest and the best in every age, to have been approved and vindicated by myriads of the mightiest understandings, and to have been sealed with the blood of a noble army of martyrs. Our church has nothing to fear from the legitimate exercise of the understandings of her children, in proving her doctrines and ordinances by that one standard to which she constantly appeals.

Let me further add, christian brethren, that it would be a baneful abuse of the

doctrine which we have been asserting, were a man to plunge himself into an ocean of questioning and doubt, "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." It is, if possible, more essential that a man should "hold fast that which is good" than that he should prove that which he receives. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself;" and what a believer has been once effectually assured of, he ought never to mistrust; it ought to be so interwoven with the texture of his soul, so inwrought into his being, that sooner than be severed from it (unless the Spirit of God were to abandon him) he could part with the heart which throbs in his breast, or have his soul and body rent asunder. The vital truths which have become thus incorporated with him are not to be tampered with and called in question; they are to be rested upon, as settled, authenticated, infallible.

And now, men and brethren, to bring

the whole of our reasoning to a practical bearing on ourselves, let me beseech you, as you desire to be saved, as you would escape irreparable error, not to hold the truth unto salvation in light esteem. If you are not prepared to buy the truth at whatever cost, and to keep it at whatever sacrifice; if you are not persuaded that it would "profit you nothing to gain the whole world and lose your own soul;" if you are not resolved, like the "merchantman seeking goodly pearls," to go and sell all that you have and purchase the pearl of great price, you cannot sit down as true disciples at the feet of Christ. The truth, and nothing but the truth, must be your simple aim. Neither party, nor prejudice, nor interest, nor the "fear of man that bringeth a snare," nor the lust of earthly things, must be allowed to warp you from the goal to which you press. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Earnest-

ness, honest, intense earnestness is the first great essential qualification in entering on the science of salvation.

With equal importunity would I urge it upon you to beware of the pride of understanding no less than of the enslavement of your reason. Realize the responsibility, rather than contend about the right of private judgment. When men make a boast that they venerate no name, recognize no creed, defer to no authority ; that they are answerable for their opinions to no being but God, what is all this but the setting up of intellectual self in the temple of God : it savours more of hell than of heaven, of the tree of disobedience than the tree of life ; it is the offspring of ignorance and the parent of heresy. “If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know,”—for he knoweth not himself. The blindest papist, who dares not form an opinion in religious

matters because he has yielded up his reason into the grasp of his priest, is a wiser man and in less fatal error than he who converts his reason into the idol he worships, and would make the mysteries of revelation bow down before its shrine. Before all things, therefore, brethren, cherish a lowly, childlike spirit in searching into the things of God. Venture not a step without clinging to the guiding hand of the Spirit of Truth. Yet do not confound self-diffidence with a doubtful mind: rest not till you arrive at a stayed assurance in the faith. Guard against that ruinous reliance on mere sincerity which is so common in the world. We must not only be sincere, but sincere in the truth. Falsehood, however sincerely held, cannot sanctify, cannot save. We are not only bound to seek for the truth, but we are also bound to find it. No means must be slighted, no effort shunned, no sacrifice shrunk from in order to succeed, and success in such a case is certain. Press on-

ward, therefore, till each one of you can humbly say—"I know in whom I have believed"—"I know what I have believed, I know why I have believed."

SERMON II.

THE STANDARD OF FAITH.

JOHN xx. 30, 31.—And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

WERE a seaman preparing for some perilous, intricate voyage, on which his fortune and his life must be staked, how deeply would it concern him not only to be assured of his own skill in the science of navigation, but to be equally certain of the accuracy of the chart by which he

must shape his course. Much more then, since the voyage through the waves of this troublesome world is one of dangers and changes untold, on the issue of which hangs, not the life of threescore years and ten, but the destinies of immortality, does it behove the immortal mariner, in launching forth upon the deep, to take heed as on the one hand that his eye is skilful and his judgment sound, so on the other that the map, which claims his confidence, is worthy of his trust, nor will betray him in the hour of need. Already, dearly beloved brethren, we have striven to make it clear to you, that the reason and conscience with which God has endued you, used in lowliness and in entire affiance on the Spirit of Truth, that these are the faculties by which the christian voyager must ascertain how he ought to steer to the haven of eternal life. But a question meets us on the present occasion, not a whit behind, but rather, if possible, before the former in momentousness—

what is the document by which we must be guided in our critical career? and is that document authentic, sufficient and intelligible—worthy of our utmost trust? This is the thrilling inquiry which bespeaks our attention this evening.

We have been wont in the church of our fathers to hold that the one sure document to pilot us, is holy Scripture, the written word of God. But as in every period of the church, so in these latter days, all who err and love to err from the truth of God, lured aside by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life into heretical paths, concur in endeavouring to lower and disparage the divine record, because their heresies cannot stand before its stern and simple testimony. Indeed, you may take it as a certain touchstone of every kind of religious system or teaching by which to try whether it be of God or of man, what is its bearing on the written word? Whatever tends to honour that

which God has honoured above all his name, is of God. Whatever has a tendency to bring that inestimable gift into disesteem, is not of God. So it was ere the light of Christianity arose. Under the Jewish dispensation, the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, all of whom corrupted the religion God had given to his people, opposed amongst themselves, as they were in other respects, yet agreed in this, they all dishonoured and deprecated the holy Scriptures, setting up the glosses, traditions and decisions of man along with or even in the place of the oracles of God. Hence, one of the heaviest charges brought by the Redeemer against these false teachers, when he came to vindicate as well as to fulfil the law and the prophets, was, "Ye have made the word of God of none effect through your traditions." In like manner, under our own glorious dispensation, no sooner did the lust of power, and the love of filthy lucre, and the pride of hu-

man intellect betray men into departures from the simplicity which is in Christ, than they at once began to obscure the sole document of our faith, bringing in stealthily pretended supplemental revelations as of co-ordinate authority, that thus they might have a ground-work and a shelter for the inventions and encroachments which they were bent upon intruding into the simple christian church. Nor has it fallen out otherwise in latter times, for (to pass over the ages distinctively styled dark, when throughout the chief portion of the nominal church holy Scripture was well nigh set aside, and faith became superstition, holiness formalism, and obedience bondage,) since the blessed Reformation, how have the heresies, which have sprung up within and still more largely without the pale of our church, still proved true to the type of heresy ; all in one way or other putting dishonour on the holy Bible. At the present moment, take as wide a range as you will, what

heterodox sect can be found, whose heterodoxy is not made manifest by this test? whether the Arian and Socinian, which impugn the inspiration, and so virtually do away with the authority of Scripture; —or the mystic visionaries, who arrogate for themselves an internal light independent of, if not paramount to, the page of inspiration:—or the modern Mormonites, who screen their wild theories under the shadow of a forged collateral revelation:—or the Romish Church, which exalts the writings of the fathers, the voice of the church, the decisions of councils, and, so called, catholic tradition, into the throne which one authority ought to fill without a peer or a competitor? Do not all these, though in many points wide as the poles asunder, manifest the same marvellous unanimity in the one cardinal error of despoiling the Bible of its supremacy?

Yea, and, christian brethren, though we grieve to say it, faithfulness obliges us to say, that the same sure mark and seal of

heresy stamps the whole system so assiduously propagated by the Tractarian school. If in this characteristic they do not go all lengths with Papal Rome, yet they venture on a frightful proximity, so that it is hard to distinguish the views of the former on this point from the views of the latter, unless it be that those are more artfully disguised, these more grossly protruded.

In grappling with the errors of Tractarianism on this vital subject, we shall, with a view to arrangement, endeavour to illustrate and at the same time refute them in the following order,—as teaching in the first place, that the holy Scriptures cannot be authenticated except tradition establish them; in the next place, that the holy Scriptures are insufficient except tradition complete them; and in the third place, that the holy Scriptures are unintelligible except tradition interpret them. In pursuing this grave and most important discussion, may God divest our minds of

all prejudice, uncharitableness and whatsoever else would hinder our souls from the reception of his truth with meekness and pure affection !

Before we proceed, it is needful that we should ascertain what the word tradition means, when used as it so perpetually is by the tongues and the pens of those who affect the phraseology of Rome. This, however, is no easy task. Whether knowingly or unconsciously, they employ the expression with so much of vagueness and variety that it can scarcely be said to have any fixed signification. Such an indefinite use of language, however serviceable in subtle controversy, sadly hinders the investigation of truth. So far as we have been able to make out from the writings of the divines in question what they commonly denote by the term, it designates the writings of the primitive fathers of the church, as containing not only their opinions and testimonies on matters of christian faith and practice, but

as conveying to us divine truths additional and supplemental to the written word, truths transmitted orally from the apostles, but never recorded by the pen of inspiration. With these they appear to unite what they call as the concurrent voice of the church, what they characterize as her catholic decisions; to which they sometimes add the decisions of our own national branch of the church.

This definition we are sensible is very loose and indeterminate, but we submit that the fault is not ours. Now, it is held that without the aid of this mysterious tradition it is impossible to prove holy Scripture to be authentic, or in other words, that without this auxiliary we cannot be sure that it is the very word of God that we have; we cannot be certified that the Gospels and Epistles are the genuine productions of those writers whose names they bear, that they are entitled to a place in the canon of revelation, and

ought to have authority in the church as the word of God. It is further argued that since we must have recourse to the testimony of the early church as given us by the fathers in order to ascertain what books are really inspired, the whole superstructure of the New Testament Scriptures may be said to rest on the pillars of tradition, and, consequently, that to set aside its paramount importance is virtually to set aside all certainty of the written word. On a point so grave as this it is only fair that we should adduce the very words of the men whose teaching we are testing. One of the chief amongst them, in a sermon on "primitive tradition," thus expresses himself*—"The fact is clearly demonstrable from Scripture, that as long as the canon of the New Testament was incomplete, the unwritten system served even as a test for the apostle's own writings. Nothing was to

* Mr. Keble's Sermon on Primitive Tradition, p. 26.

be read as canonical except it agreed with the faith once delivered to the saints." Subsequently he adds,* "The use of apostolical tradition may well correct the presumptuous irreverence of disparaging the fathers, under a plea of magnifying Scripture. Here is a tradition so highly honoured by the Almighty Founder and Guide of the church, as to be made the standard and rule of his own divine Scriptures. The very writings of the apostles were to be first tried by it before they could be incorporated into the canon. Thus the Scriptures themselves, as it were, do homage to the tradition of the apostles. The despisers, therefore, of that tradition take part inadvertently or profanely with the despisers of Scripture itself." One quotation more from another authority must suffice. "I purpose, then, now to enlarge on this point, that is, to show that those who object to church doctrines,

* Mr. Keble's Sermon on Primitive Tradition,
p. 28.

(that is, some of the high views which some hold,) whether from deficiency of Scripture, or patristical proof, ought, if they acted consistently on these principles, to object to Scripture; a melancholy truth, if it be a truth, and I fear it is but too true. Too true it is, I fear, in fact, not only that men ought, if consistent, to proceed from opposing church doctrine, to oppose Scripture, but that the leaven which at present makes the mind oppose church doctrine, does set it, or soon will set it, against Scripture. I wish to declare what I think will be found really to be the case, viz. that a battle for the canon of Scripture, is but the next step after a battle for the creed—that the creed comes first in the assault, that is all; and that if we were not defending the creed, we should at this moment be defending the canon.”*

These passages, however misty their

* Tract 85, (1840,) p. 71.

meaning, convey enough to startle any serious mind. The last paragraph more especially it is impossible to read without righteous indignation and horror. That a minister of our church should press upon us as an alternative either to submit implicitly to tradition or to repudiate holy Scripture, to make our election between credulity and infidelity, is as monstrous as it is deplorable. With respect to the reasoning which is attempted, it rests on a baseless assumption ; it takes for granted that there were no holy Scriptures in the church until the New Testament Scriptures were written, and that the former were not widely diffused till the latter were superadded. But, where is the fairness of blinking the fact that there had been a written revelation in the hands of the visible church, centuries upon centuries, ere one of the Apostles took up the inspired pen ? Indeed, it is clear that one chief end which the Almighty designed in choosing out and constituting the

Jewish church, was to make it the depository of his lively oracles and the witness to the record of his will. Up to the period when He separated a people to himself, whatever of divine knowledge there was, lingering in the world, floated down the stream of time on the raft of tradition, and a miserable vehicle it proved ! As if God would suffer full proof to be made of the insufficiency of that mode of perpetuating his truth upon earth, before He should supersede it by the inestimable gift of a written document. It was on the utter failure of the one method that he introduced the other ; a failure so signal that the scattered beams of revelation which had been vouchsafed at divers times and in sundry manners, before the call of Abraham, were well nigh wholly quenched, and gross idolatry had with little exception overspread the earth. At this crisis, it pleased God to originate a visible church amongst mankind. Though aforetime, in every period, there had been

those who called upon the name of the Lord and like Enoch walked with God and found eternal life ; yet an organized body, such as is intended by the expression "a visible church," could not, properly speaking, be said to have existed. But no sooner had such organization been accomplished, no sooner had God moulded and finished his golden candlestick, than he placed upon it the heaven-lighted lamp of a written revelation. Nor was that revelation made to rest on antecedent tradition ; it was avouched by God himself with the most direct demonstration and the most overwhelming grandeur. Descending on Sinai with every imaginable circumstance of majesty, in the presence of the assembled nation of Israel, He wrote, amid the thick darkness, the summary of his law and covenant on two tables of stone and delivered them into the hands of Moses. Awful honour put on the temple of inspiration—that its first stone was laid by the very hand of God !

To what the Almighty had engraven, large additions were made by the pen of Moses, who wrote as he was instructed by the Lord, speaking to him face to face. And all these circumstances which avouched their divine origin were embodied in the sacred writings, and were recalled to the minds of the people as sanctioning those writings, when Moses committed them to the nation on the plains of Moab. Such and so in-subvertible is the foundation of the written word. Holy Scripture was in no wise made to rest on anterior tradition, but to stand, self-poised and self-sustained, as founded directly by the Almighty. The rather, because that in the record was interwoven a prophetic history, stretching through all afterages, of the very people to whose keeping it was entrusted ; so that they, of necessity, became at once the guardians and the witnesses of the inestimable deposit. Whithersoever the Israelites went, howsoever they might be scattered over the face of the earth, bearing with them copies

of their heavenly documents, of whose accuracy they were intensely jealous, they became everywhere a living testimony to the written word; for those prophecies touching themselves which were recorded in that word, being in the course of fulfilment even in the desolations and dispersions which befel the Jews, constitute a standing and ever-growing demonstration of the authenticity of the writings which contained such predictions.

It further claims special notice that in the Scriptures, so entrusted to the people of God, there was provision made for, yea there were direct predictions of, after and further revelation of the Divine will. It was foretold that the Lord God would raise up out of the midst of their brethren a prophetlike unto Moses, to whom the people should hearken. Tests were supplied and instructions and injunctions given for the trial of subsequent prophets and the determination of the claims of their writings to be incorporated with the book

of God. In conformity with such instructions, and as approved by such tests, the prophets were added to the law, until the canon of the Old Testament was complete.

It is on this divinely laid and self-supported rock, and not on the shifting sand of oral tradition, that the Scriptures of the New Testament are built. To the traditions which were rife among the Jews Christ never referred, save to condemn them, but both He and his apostles incessantly appealed to the sacred Scriptures in confirmation and authentication of the fuller revelations which they super-added. The exact accordance of the latter with the former, the way in which these realized and accomplished those, the antitype squaring minutely with the type and the event with the prophecy,—this was the evidence on which the New Testament writers specially rested their claims to be relieved with faith and submission. They made it abundantly plain, that they came not

to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil ; that the divine cast which they supplied so exactly corresponded with the divine mould which had been aforetime received that no honest mind could adopt the one except as a consequence he should embrace the other. Time would fail us were we to attempt to bring forward the inexhaustible illustration of these remarks which is scattered throughout the New Testament. Need we do more than remind you how perpetually we meet with the following forms of expression in the gospel : " All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets." " It is written." " It is written again." " Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer." " The Scriptures must be fulfilled." " Search the Scriptures for they testify of me." " How readest thou ?" " Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me ; but if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe my words ?" In the same manner

the holy apostles avouched the New Testament by appealing to the Old. What, for the most part, are all their discourses, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, but chains of reasoning drawn from the inspired canon. They described the facts which they attested, as those which God had foretold by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. They bore witness to the Lord Jesus as the prophet of whom Moses said unto the fathers, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me." "To him," they asserted, "gave all the prophets witness." The general character of St. Paul's preaching is thus delineated : "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, (the Jews,) and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ." And as, in preaching, the apostles made their

appeal not to tradition but to Scripture, so did their hearers also, in trying what was preached. It is told, to the honour of the Bereans, that “they searched the Scriptures daily whether those things (which were taught them) were so ;” and, as a consequence, it is added, “therefore many of them believed.” From the epistles, no less than the discourses of the apostles, proofs might be accumulated to show that they rested the establishment of the divine authority of the gospel on the basis of the divine authority of the ancient Scriptures, and that too amongst the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Two or three of the most striking passages must suffice. Speaking of the Old Testament scriptures, St. Paul avers that “they are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,” thus connecting, indissolubly, faith in Christ with faith in those Scriptures. St. Peter, in referring to the epistles of St. Paul, expressly classes them with “the other Scriptures,” meaning no

doubt the law and the prophets ; in this way recognizing the former as identified with the canon of the latter. But we must draw this argument to a close. We conclude therefore, that the superstructure of the New Testament, instead of resting its weight on the fragments of oral tradition, is raised upon the sure foundation of the Old Testament Scriptures, the corner-stone of which was laid upon Mount Sinai by the Almighty architect of all things. Perfect unity and continuity characterise the whole structure ; part is so adjusted to part, and stone so interlaced with stone, that the whole must stand or fall together.

It further claims to be noted, that those who contend that "the unwritten word of God," as they term it, was originally the test of the written, overlook or withhold the important fact, that the chief portion of the New Testament Scriptures was received in the churches as of divine authority, during the life and the labours

of the greater number of the apostles. Is it fair then, to assume, that apostolical teaching, as kept in memory by the disciples of the apostles, was the chief touchstone of the genuineness of what purported to be apostolical writing? Such might, in some measure, have been the case had their works been posthumous, but as it was, would not the appeal be, if uncertainty existed, to the apostles themselves? And were not they, who wrote by the inspiration of God, competent to determine what documents were inspired? And is it to be imagined, that they would suffer any records to be palmed upon the church as divine, to be embodied in the canon of revelation, of the genuineness and authenticity of which there could be any question?

In thus jealously vindicating holy Scripture from the charge of depending on tradition for its authority, we would by no means be understood to depreciate the value of primitive ecclesiastical writers as

historical witnesses. We fully acknowledge their testimony in favour of holy Scripture to be of no small value, to be a prominent link in the great chain of evidence wherewith God has encircled his truth. But this acknowledgment in no-wise commits us to the mischievous notion, that they are therefore to be regarded as in some sort infallible authorities in doctrinal matters, as entitled to a reverence only secondary to that due to the inspired penmen themselves. Surely it is one thing to give credible evidence to the genuineness of a book, and quite another thing to be essential to the integrity and completeness of that book. Josephus and Celsus furnish important witness in corroboration of the gospel, but are they therefore invested with any authority over our faith? We repeat it, my brethren, we do not disparage the primitive writers of the church; in their own place they are worthy of veneration and respect; as the attendants and train-bearers of a

monarch derive honour from him on whom they wait ; but woe be to them, if they attempt to invade his office, or arrogate his authority.

We cannot bring ourselves to close this branch of our discussion, without adverting to that intrinsical evidence which all holy Scripture carries with it to those who are “spiritually-minded ;” a species of proof held in very light esteem by unbelievers, but, as we are persuaded, to many of you, beloved, supremely satisfying. There is a heavenly stamp on what has been given by inspiration of God. It is fraught with such self-evidencing power to those endued with spiritual discernment, that they little lean on external evidence, however valuable in its place, they little prize, for themselves, traditional testimony, however necessary in argument with the doubtful and unbelieving. The saints have “the witness in themselves.” They have “set to their seal that God is true,” and that all holy Scripture is the

truth of God. Their sanctified reasons and consciences give clear response to the sound of the "*lively oracles*," but they respond to none beside. They know the voice of "the good shepherd," but "they know not the voice of a stranger." Hence, you will find many of the staunchest and most earnest believers amongst those who have never heard of the existence of tradition, and know nought of patristic lore. True it is, they might not be able to encounter the subtlety of the Jesuit or the sophistry of the infidel, yet would they stand unshaken in their simple belief, and be prepared to seal that belief with their blood. To such happy individuals there belongs so nice a perception, so discriminative a taste, that we will venture to say they could at once tell, even though themselves unable to read, if transition were made, in reading in their hearing, from the pages of inspiration to the writings of the holiest and best of the early fathers, or to those apocryphal writings which the Church of

Rome presumes to blend with the Word of God. So marked is the difference between the former and the latter, in tone, in sentiment, in spirit, and in style ; these so earthly, those so heavenly ; these so redolent of man, those so instinct with God ; that such as have “their senses exercised to discern good and evil,” can scarcely be at a loss to tell, which is of earth and which from heaven. Happy, thrice happy they, enriched with so excellent a gift, endued with such heavenly wisdom !

II. The next point on which the views of the Tractarian school have a tendency to disparage the holy Scriptures, is, that they represent them as insufficient, except tradition complete them. Here again, let us briefly call your attention to the language used by these divines. One of the chief amongst them thus writes : “Catholic tradition is a divine informant in religious matters,”* “the unwritten word.”†

* Newman. Lect. on Rom. p. 329. † Ibid p. 355.

“ We agree with the Romanist in appealing to antiquity as *our great teacher*.”* “ These two (the Bible and Catholic tradition) together, make up a joint rule (of faith.”)† Scripture is “ but the document of appeal, and catholic tradition the *authoritative teacher* of Christians.”‡ Another eminent writer of the same class, treating of concurrent patristical tradition, asserts that it is that “ oral teaching” of the apostles which the “ Holy Spirit inspired.”§ Such traditions are “ unquestionable relics of the apostles,” || “ precious apostolical relics.”¶ Such tradition is “ practically infallible ;”** and “ if we will be impartial, we cannot hide it from ourselves that God’s *unwritten word*, if it can be anyhow authenticated, must necessarily demand the same reverence from us, (as his written word ;) and for exactly the same reason, because

* Newman. Lecture on Rom. p. 47.

† Ibid. p. 327. ‡ Ibid. p. 343.

§ Keble’s Sermon, 3rd. edit. p. 24. || Ibid. p. 41.

¶ Ibid. p. 42. ** Ibid. p. 142 and 146.

it is his word.”* “Confining our view to that which *touches the foundation*, we shall find that the matters are *neither few nor unimportant* which are settled by traditional evidence. The points of catholic consent, *known by tradition*, constitute the *knots and ties of the whole system*, being such as these,—the canon of Scripture, the full doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, &c.”† *The rule of faith is made up of Scripture and tradition together.*‡ The reputed leader of the party thus writes: “The unanimous witness of Christendom is the *only*, and the fully sufficient, and the really existing guarantee of the *whole revealed* faith. Scripture and tradition taken together are the joint rule of faith.”§ “Though Scripture be considered to be *altogether silent* as to the intermediate state *there is nothing in this circumstance to disprove*

* Keble’s Sermon, 3rd. edit. p. 26.

† Ibid. p. 41, 42. ‡ Ibid. p. 82.

§ Tract 78, p. 2.

the CHURCH's DOCTRINE (if there be other ground for it) that there is an intermediate state, and that it is important.” (In other words, though we find nothing about purgatory in holy Scripture, yet if there be other ground for believing the Romish doctrine on the subject, the silence of the written word is of little moment. What an artful inlet for all the superstitions of the middle ages !) “The fundamental tenet,” it is asserted by a late organ of the party, “which doctrinally is at the root” of the difference between the Tractarians and their opponents is, “*that there is altogether sufficient evidence, INDEPENDENTLY OF THE SCRIPTURES, that the apostles taught as divine and necessary certain doctrines, and inculcated as essential certain practices.*”† Alas ! that such should be a specimen of the manner in which some who have subscribed the sixth Article of our church, dare to treat that holy volume*

* Tract 85, p. 48.

† Brit. Crit. for April, 1842, pp. 273, 274.

whose sufficiency they have so solemnly avouched. Must not the moral sense, as well as the judgment, have been fearfully warped before a man could be guilty of such inconsistency?

We must content ourselves with advancing but a few out of the multitudinous arguments which might be adduced to vindicate the sufficiency of the written word. In the outset, is it not fair to infer, that if God saw fit to furnish his church with an abiding record of his will, he would make that record adequate to the purpose which it was to serve? If such a document were needful for the conservation of *any* of the truths which pertain to our peace, would it not be equally needful for the conservation of *all*? And if, after the experiment of oral tradition as a vehicle for the transmission of divine truth for more than two thousand years, it was upon its utter failure that it seemed good to God to supersede it by holy Scripture, can it be

imagined, that we should again have to recur to the same superseded and ineffectual instrumentality?—that we should have to forsake the secure and sacred ark for the fragments which float upon the waves? Are we now, in the fulness of time, when “the darkness is past and the true light shineth,” when, to the law and the prophets, have been added the Gospels and the Epistles, are we now to be guided by the meteor of tradition instead of the day-star of Scripture?

Our former argument will be greatly strengthened by our next, which is, that the writings of the New Testament clearly indicate their own completeness. This they do, both negatively and positively. Negatively, for they neither refer us, nor lead us to look, to other and after revelations, as we have shown to have been done most fully in the case of the Old Testament Scriptures. And can this silence be mistaken? Could it have failed that there would have been some intimation of the (so-

styled) "unwritten word," had such an additional guide been designed for us? But we have surer ground to rest upon, for the writings of the New Testament repeatedly imply, not to say assert, their own fulness and finality. They represent themselves as the casket into which were deposited the truths which, in the first instance, were spoken, and, in the next written by inspiration of God; and they plainly assume, that in this depository every heavenly gem intended for the church's treasure was carefully bestowed. To this effect, St Luke thus prefaches his gospel, "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order,

most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou has been instructed." Of similar import is the striking passage from the gospel of St. John on which this discourse is founded; "and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." It is true that the Evangelist here admits that much was passed over which might have been added to the divine record, yet he at the same time asserts, that enough is recorded for our faith and salvation. Guided as the sacred penmen were by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, they must have been as infallibly right in what they omitted, as in what they inserted in the book of God. In this connexion, we may fitly introduce the words of St.

Paul to the Corinthians, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." Again, St. Paul in his epistle to the Philippians says, "To write the same things unto you to me indeed is not grievous but for you it is safe." In like manner St. Peter, in writing to his brethren, declares, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things though ye know them and be established in the present truth, yea I think it meet so long as I am in this tabernacle to stir you up by putting you in remembrance. moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." Similar is the testimony of St. John: "These things," says he, "I have written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of

God ; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. How manifestly do these testimonies prove, in the first place, that *apostolical writing* was “ needful ” in order to consolidate, preserve, and perpetuate *apostolical preaching* ; in the next place, that the former was intended to be identical, and, (in all things necessary to salvation) co-extensive with the latter ; and, in the third place, and by consequence, that the one was to serve as a perfect substitute for the other. We cannot wind up these testimonies more emphatically, than by the thrilling language of the Saviour himself, in the book of Revelation—that topstone of the temple of truth : “ I testify to every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book ; if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book : and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away

his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." What a tremendous warning! And if it stands, with flaming sword, to guard the precinct of "*this book*," then, surely, no less to guard the *entire book* of God; and may not *he* well pause and tremble, who would think to add aught, as of co-ordinate authority, to that awful volume for which the Lord God is so jealous?

All such attempts ought to be uncompromisingly withheld, because they would introduce a principle as perilous as it is indefinite. We know not whither it would lead. Seducing us from the rock on which we have anchored securely, it would leave us to drift on a starless and shoreless ocean; or, to change the figure, this principle would open the floodgates of innovation, and we see in the case of apostate Rome, what a deluge of superstitious usage and heretical opinion is certain to follow. How true then, the

beautiful language of our translators, in their preface to the translation of the Bible: "But now, what piety without truth? What truth, what saving truth, without the word of God? What word of God whereof we may be sure without the Scripture?" The false principle, which we are reprobating, tends, at once, to unfix the landmarks of salvation, and ultimately to cast the Bible altogether into the shade.

But further, the claims set up for tradition are wholly indefensible, because it is impossible to determine whether any or what portion of it demands to be considered as divine. If it be supposed that such "unwritten revelation" has been transmitted to us orally, what can be more vague? We know how uncertain, after the lapse of a few months, not to say years, any statement becomes which is so reported. The more so, if the prejudices and passions of men are called into play by that which they report. What idea

then, can be formed of the transmission of truth through such conveyance, for nearly eighteen centuries ? If, however, it be alledged, that these fragments of inspiration have been treasured up in the writings of the fathers, and in the decrees of the universal church, we rejoin—but who is the infallible judge that shall infallibly distinguish the precious from the vile, that shall unerringly discern between the sand-grains of earth, and the gold-dust of heaven ? He must possess inspiration to do so. Rome, on this point, is only consistent in arrogating to herself the attribute of infallibility ; but our church is guiltless of any such arrogance, and, assuredly, those who call themselves her sons ought not to set up higher pretensions for her, than she ventures to advance for herself. To refer us to the voluminous, diffuse, sometimes intricate, frequently doubtful, often-times turgid and obscure, in many instances, interpolated and mutilated, writings of the fathers, in order that, amidst the

heap, we may search out such pure pearls as we shall dare to string upon the same golden thread with the jewels wherewith God himself hath enriched and beautified his church, is to set us upon a task as toilsome and bootless as that of the Israelites in the land of their bondage, when they were scattered abroad over the face of the country to gather stubble instead of straw. Bring forward, it may be safely retorted on the partisans of unwritten revelation, those supplemental truths of which you speak, and furnish us with the same demonstration of their divinity that we have of the divinity of holy Scripture, and then we will pledge ourselves to treat them with the same reverence, and bow to them with the same submission.

One might imagine, from the urgency of many on the subject of tradition, that there was a fearful deficiency of information and instruction in the book of God. But is such indeed the case? So far from it, that there is no vital point on which it

does not give us line upon line, and precept upon precept. Even the two subjects usually instanced as those on which larger information, than the written word supplies, seems to be required—infant baptism and the change of the sabbath; even on these there is quite enough of light reflected to satisfy a humble mind. The analogy between baptism and circumcision, the initiatory sacrament under the old dispensation, seconded by the example of Christ in welcoming and blessing little children, is sufficient in the one case; and the indications and intimations of the change of the day, in the apostolic church, are sufficient in the other. Still it is alleged, that we have nothing in the Bible like a digested creed, a systematic summary of truth; and hence it is inferred that such a summary must be sought for amid the relics of antiquity. But is not the, seemingly, unsystematic method in which divine truth is communicated by the inspired records, the result of design not of incompleteness? And

is not this (as the worldly-wise would deem it) apparent imperfection of Scripture, one of its characteristic excellences, so that in this respect, as in every other, “the foolishness of God is wiser than men;” for this very peculiarity specially adapts it to the unskilled and unscientific multitude of the human race; fitting it to be the book of the world, to come down to every understanding and home to every heart? Yea, and is not this distinctive feature of the *word* of God in strict harmony with the character of the *works* of God? In the latter, as in the former, how little of palpable plan, how little of scientific system! Yet, what order, amid seeming confusion—what design, amid seeming casualty—what unity, amidst endless diversity! Let us not be misunderstood however, as though we would speak slightly of received and venerable creeds and confessions of faith; they have their place and their value in theology, even as classifications and compendiums have in natural philo-

sophy ; but as in the latter case we do not judge and correct nature by these, but rather these by nature, so we do not try and judge Scripture by our creeds, but our creeds by holy Scripture. So pronounces our own scriptural church in her eighth Article, wherein she declares that the three primitive creeds "ought thoroughly to be received and believed," (not simply because they are of hoary age, nor because they have been universally acknowledged by the church, but) "because they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture." And as we would not be understood to depreciate primitive creeds, so neither, we must in justice to ourselves repeat it, would we be understood to disparage the testimony of primitive writers in matters of faith and practice, in questions of order, discipline, and ecclesiastical constitution, provided only and always, "that whatsoever is not read" in holy Scripture, "nor may be

proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

III. Important as is this branch of our discussion, we must not enlarge, but rather hasten, in the last place, to exemplify and expose the tendency of the writings of the Tractarian school to dis honour holy Scripture, by representing it as unintelligible except as tradition interpret it. On this startling point we find them thus teaching: "When the sense of Scripture, as interpreted by reason, is contrary to the sense given to it by catholic antiquity, we ought to side with the latter."* Another author, of the same class, thus writes: "The gospel doctrine or message," "is but indirectly and *covertly* recorded in Scripture under the surface."† And again, "We have reason to

* Newman's Lectures on Rom. p. 160.

† Tract 85, p. 27.

believe that God, our Maker and Governor, has spoken to us by revelation, yet why has he not spoken more clearly ? He has given us doctrines which are but obscurely gathered from Scripture, and a Scripture which is but obscurely gathered from history. It is not a single fact, but a double fact; it is a coincidence. We have two informants, and both leave room for doubt. God's ways are surely not our ways.* Bad as this is, it is even outdone in the following paragraph, from a late organ of the party. "Of what an excellent character is the Bible, if we have no means given us by which to understand or interpret it? 'If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?' To give up the one sense of Scripture, which the church teaches, is ultimately almost to give up the light of revelation itself, and to reduce man again to the guidance of natural reason; for though it leaves a

* Tract 85, p. 108.

divine book in his hands, it refers him entirely to human reason for the explanation of it. The words he reads are heavenly, but the sense he fixes upon them is the result of the mere exercise of his natural powers of mind. He wants the dogma, *the church's traditional divinely inspired sense of the Bible, to make it really a revelation to him.** Monstrous recklessness and hardihood of error! This writer would actually fling us back upon utter scepticism, if we will not bend our neck to the yoke of ecclesiastical despotism. Nay, he does not hesitate, so far as his puny efforts can avail, to shake the pillars of scriptural faith, for the purpose of strengthening the authority of the church. This, however, is not the first time, nor the first instance, in which Antichrist and those who symbolize with Antichrist, have joined hands with infidelity to accomplish their purpose.

Probably, of all the erroneous notions

* British Critic, April 1842, p. 481.

broached by the Tractarian school on the subject of holy Scripture, the one before us is the grossest and most mischievous. To what in effect does it lead ? It leads to the conclusion, "Here is, indeed, a revelation of the mind and will of God to teach us what we must believe and do, in order to salvation, but it is so obscure, equivocal, ambiguous, that unless you can find a divine interpretation of it, unless such an interpretation is supplied by the church, the book is a sealed book to you." Just what Rome teaches. She will, under certain limitations, and by licence, put the Bible into the hands of her members, but then, she virtually accompanies the loan with such words as these: "You must not, at your peril, presume to understand this book, or draw from it any inferences or lessons whatever, these must come to you through the medium of your church." Away with such solemn mockery ! So to adventure the sacred volume, iron-bound and clasped, into the hands of a man, is

no better than to give him a stone instead of the bread of life, a dark lantern instead of the crystal lamp of inspiration. Ay, and further, it is quite to sink the Bible in the estimation of the recipient; for, by placing the church and tradition between him and the book, it makes them, and not it, the standard of faith to him. To the former, therefore, not to the latter, will his homage be paid; for what is next to a man, what he has most immediately to do with, *that* he will most heed and regard. Nor is it a libel against the devout Romanist to say—nor say we it in bitterness but in sorrow,—that with him the authority of his church—that is, the teaching of his priest, (for practically the priest is the church to the great mass of Rome's children,) is quite paramount to the authority of the word of God. With him the question is, not what saith holy Scripture? but what says the church? what say the clergy? And so will it fare with ourselves, fellow-

Protestants, should the laity of the land suffer certain of the clergy to carry out their Romanizing theories, and interpose themselves between the people and the Bible.

Not only does tradition, when placed between us and the word of God, necessarily throw that word into the background ; but it serves also, to disguise and discolour its meaning. If you never saw the light of the sun but as it shone through stained glass, you would be a stranger to the pure simple light of heaven ; it would come to you tinged and shaded with the tints of the medium through which it passed : so if the light of life never reach your minds but through the medium of tradition, you can have no certainty that you have it in its purity, for it cannot fail to take its complexion from the medium through which it reaches you ; in other words, the complexion which the hierarchy and the priesthood may think it will best answer their purposes it

should take. Or, to change the figure, if the oracles of God are to be treated as though they were strangers, speaking an unknown tongue, who can make themselves understood only through the means of an interpreter, then it is plain that they will be very much in the power and at the mercy of that interpreter.

But more than this, it puts a shameful indignity on the divine word, to represent it as so enigmatical and unintelligible; as though it were a *mystification*, and not a *revelation* of the truth of God. The gospel is given to make men wise unto salvation. It is sent, as it was preached, to the poor. It is a message of love from the Father of the spirits of all flesh, to his ignorant children, and is it impossible for them to ascertain its purport? Were the Redeemer and his apostles easily understood when they preached, so that the common people heard them gladly: and can the same teaching be unintelligible when written? Taking no higher

ground for the inspired penman, than that they were honest, intelligent men, who understood what they wrote, and wrote to be understood, surely, if we even put their inspiration out of view, they ought to be allowed the justice done to ordinary writers, of being permitted to speak for themselves. *Would* they not, or *could* they not express themselves intelligibly? Why, then, must St. Paul and St. Peter be interpreted by Irenæus or Augustine? Far more grave, however, is the aspect of the imputations on the written word, when we realize the awful fact that the writings so traduced are the work of the Holy Spirit. Well may a man stop and tremble before he dares impute indistinctness to the teaching of the Spirit of Truth. What though enthusiasts have distorted, and heretics perverted his blessed records,—how does this disprove their sufficiency and simplicity, any more than do the abuses of the light of nature by wicked men, disprove its original excellency?

“ To the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.” The obscurity whieh rests upon the sacred page to the eyes of so many, exists not there, but in the state of their own hearts and minds. To the man of imperfect vision the brightest day is misty. To the simple heaven-taught disciple, holy Scripture is not capable of conflicting senses. One plain, consistent sense pervades the whole, and though there be deep things, which he cannot fathom, they surpass his ken, not through their dimness, but through their profundity. Such an one finds Scripture itself to be its own true interpreter; in its light he sees light, and “ comparing spiritual things with spiritual,” having respect to the whole revelation, and not dwelling disproportionately on isolated passages, he “ shall know the truth, and the truth shall make him free.”

All this is abundantly supported by the testimony of holy Scripture to itself. This part of our argument, however, has been so largely anticipated in our discourse on private judgment, that we shall content ourselves with a few additional proofs. How clear the witness of David—"The entrance of thy words giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple." And again he declares, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." In like manner he observes, "the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the eyes." How encouraging also the promise of our Redeemer. "If any man will do the will of my Father, he shall know of the doctrine;" and to sum up all in the comprehensive and emphatical language of St. Paul, addressed to his son Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profit-

able for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What shall we say, then, to these things? In the face of such testimony, what presumption it is to insinuate that the Book of God is either unintelligible or incomplete? Does the sun need our tapers to irradiate it? Or the ocean our buckets to fill up the measure of its waters? Perish all other books in the world—and this one sole book would suffice to guide every simple believer to "glory, and honour, and immortality."

Having now, beloved brethren, endeavoured to satisfy you, that holy Scripture instead of being unauthenticated without tradition, stands self-sustained, and self-evidenced; instead of being incomplete without tradition, "contains all things necessary to salvation;" instead of being unintelligible without tradition, is its own best expositor; it only remains that we show

you how exactly all this is in harmony with the teaching of our scriptural church; insomuch that those who teach otherwise are as little in accordance with the church of which they profess themselves ministers, as they are with the Bible of which they profess themselves preachers. Let us, then, hearken to her unfaltering voice. In the ordination of her ministers, she solemnly reminds them, that "seeing they cannot by any other means compass the doing of so great a work, pertaining to the salvation of man, but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the holy Scriptures, and with a life agreeable to the same, they should consider how studious they ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures;" and "in framing the manners both of themselves and them that specially pertain unto them, according to the rule of the same Scriptures." The bishop subsequently demands of the candidate for priest's orders, as it was demanded of himself when he

was consecrated to his high function, “Are you persuaded that the holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined, out of the said Scriptures, to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?” To this impressive question, the candidate replies, “I am so persuaded, and have so determined by God’s grace.” How expressive also, how graceful and affecting, the simple action, used in the services, both for the consecration of a bishop and the ordination of a priest, of placing in the hands of the person consecrated, or ordained, a copy of the entire Bible! How eloquent the act! How demonstrative of the church’s spirit!

If from our ordination services, we turn to the book of homilies, here we might

quote page upon page to show how gloriously our church maintains the sufficiency and simplicity of Scripture. In her first homily she thus expresses herself, "Unto a christian man there can be nothing either more necessary or profitable than the knowledge of holy Scripture, forasmuch as in it is contained God's true word, setting forth his glory and also man's duty. And there is no truth nor doctrine necessary for our justification and everlasting salvation, but that is or may be drawn out of that fountain and well of truth. Therefore, as many as may be desirous to enter into the right and perfect way unto God, must apply their minds to know holy Scripture ; without the which they can neither sufficiently know God and his will, neither their office and duty. And as drink is pleasant to them that be dry, and meat to them that be hungry, so is the reading, hearing, searching, and studying of holy Scripture to them that be desirous to know God or themselves, and to

do his will." And in another place, our church meets on this wise the subtle objections of those who would shut up the holy records by pretending that they are dark and obscure. "Some go about to excuse them by their own frailness and fearfulness, saying that they dare not read holy Scriptures, lest through their ignorance they fall into any error. Others pretend that the difficulty to understand it, and the hardness thereof is so great, that it is meet to be read only of clerks and learned men. As touching the first : Ignorance of God's word is the cause of all error, as Christ himself affirmed to the Sadducees, saying, *that they erred because they knew not the Scriptures.* How should they then eschew error, that will be still ignorant ? And how should they come out of ignorance that will not read nor hear that thing which should give them knowledge ? He that now hath most knowledge was at the first ignorant ; yet he forbore not to read for fear he should

fall into error : but he diligently read lest he should remain in ignorance, and through ignorance into error. And if you will not know the truth of God, (a thing most necessary for you,) lest you fall into error; by the same reason you may then lie still and never go, lest, if you go, you fall into the mine; nor eat any good meat lest you take a surfeit ; nor sow any corn, nor labour in your occupation, nor use your merchandize, for fear you lose your seed, your labour, your stock ; and so by that reason it should be best for you to live idly, and never to take in hand to do any manner of good thing, lest peradventure some evil thing may chance thereof. And if you be afraid to fall into error by reading of holy Scripture, I shall show you how you may read without danger of error. Read it humbly, with a meek and a lowly heart, to the intent you may glorify God, and not yourself, with the knowledge of it ; and read it not without daily praying to God, that he would direct your reading

to good effect ; and take upon you to expound it no further than you can plainly understand it.' And once more, even to the weakest and least learned Christian she speaks thus encouragingly : " And concerning the hardness of Scripture ; he that is so weak that he is not able to brook strong meat, yet he may suck the sweet and tender milk, and defer the rest until he wax stronger, and come to more knowledge. For God receiveth the learned and unlearned, and casteth away none, but is indifferent to all. And the Scripture is full, as well of low vallies, plain ways, and easy for every man to use and to walk in : as also of high hills and mountains which few men can climb unto. And, whosoever giveth his mind to holy Scriptures, with diligent study and learning, and desire, it cannot be, saith St. John Chrysostom, that he should be left without help. For either God Almighty will send him some godly doctor to teach him as he did to instruct the eunuch, a nobleman of

Ethiopia and treasurer unto queen Candace, who having a great affection to read the Scripture, (although he understood it not,) yet for the desire he had unto God's word, God sent his apostle Philip to declare unto him the true sense of the Scripture that he read ; or else, if we lack a learned man to instruct and teach us, yet God himself from above will give light unto our minds, and teach us those things which are necessary for us, and wherein we be ignorant. And in another place Chrysostom saith, "that man's human and worldly wisdom or science is not needful to the understanding of Scripture, but the revelation of the Holy Ghost who inspireth the true meaning of them, that with humility and diligence do search therefore." He that asketh shall have, and he that seeketh shall find ; and he that knocketh shall have the door opened. If we read once, twice, or thrice, and understand not, let us not cease so, but still continue reading, praying, asking of others, and so

by still knocking, at the last the door shall be opened : as St. Augustine saith, “ although many things in Scripture be spoken in obscure mysteries, yet there is nothing spoken in dark mysteries in one place, but the self-same thing in other places is spoken more familiarly and plainly to the capacity both of the learned and unlearned. And those things in the Scripture that be plain to understand, and necessary to salvation, every man’s duty is to learn them, to print them in memory, and effectually to exercise them. And as for the dark mysteries to be contented to be ignorant in them until such time as it shall please God to open those things unto him.”

These truly, are wholesome sentiments, and this is refreshing language. The champions of tradition receive no quarter from the homilies. Neither is the tone of the articles less clear and decisive. In the 20th Article it is thus ruled : “ It is not lawful for the church to ordain anything that

is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the church be a witness and keeper of holy writ, yet as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation." The 21st Article determines that the things ordained by general councils "as necessary to salvation, have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture." In the 8th Article, as we have already had occasion to remark, she finds the authority of the three catholic creeds, not on their catholicity or antiquity, but upon their susceptibility of certain proof from holy Scripture. And to come to the crowning article on this vital point, an article which we would were inscribed in letters of gold in the view of every pulpit in the Church of England—in her 6th Article, the church avers, that "holy

Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation ; so that whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." Blessed be God for the testimony of our church. *Her* voice at least is neither heartless nor equivocal. Oh that all who call themselves her children, were imbued with her spirit, and faithful to her principles !

And now, christian brethren, " let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter." Grasp more firmly, and hold more tenaciously than ever, the vital principle that the Bible and the Bible only is the standard of our faith. This principle is the Thermopylæ of Protestant truth, as maintained by our church. It is here the battle of the Reformation is to be fought anew. Let this outpost be carried, and our church is gone. Withstand to the face every man, every opinion, however

specious, howeversanctimonious, which has any tendency, the most remote, to compromise the supremacy, to shake the throne of holy Scripture. Let your watchword be, “to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no truth in them.” Give indeed, due reverence to ecclesiastical authority—to primitive creeds and confessions of faith—to the authorized ministrations of the stewards of God’s mysteries—to the order and the decisions of our faithful church; yet let not any of these nor all of these lead you from, but lead you to, that word which “liveth and abideth for ever.”

What praises and thanksgivings ought we to render to the Father of all our mercies, because we have his word so free, so perfect, so plenteous, in our own tongue, wherein we were born; witnessing in the peasant’s cot, no less than in the noble’s mansion, or in the prelate’s palace! Amid the boding clouds which are thicken-

ing over Christendom, this is perhaps the most hopeful presage of the result of the convulsion which impends us. Can Rome, with all her motley allies, arrest the progress of the Bible? Can she stifle the voices of the million upon million of the lively oracles which far and wide lift up their voices against her abominations, and testify of her coming doom? Would to God that we were more thankful for this inestimable benefit, more faithful in using it to his glory! Our unthankfulness and unfaithfulness have provoked him to allow such false doctrines as those with which we have been grappling this evening, to come in upon us like a flood. Humiliation, intercession, repentance, fruits meet for repentance, these must usher in our deliverance; these will indicate that the Spirit of the Lord is lifting up a standard against the enemy. Take heed then, beloved brethren, that you do not glory in the privilege, boast of the right, and be jealous for the liberty of searching the

Scriptures, whilst you are negligent of the solemn duty, and unmindful of the pressing responsibility involved. Bear in mind, we beseech you, that it is not the Bible in the hand, nor the Bible on the lip ; the Bible contended for as the banner of a political confederacy, or the badge of an ecclesiastical party, that will, in truth and reality, avail us ; but the Bible in such wise heard, read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested ; that by patience and comfort thereof, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which it unfolds and imparts in our Saviour Jesus Christ. It is this, and only this, which will avail us in the struggles of life, in the agonies of death, in the solemnities of judgment.

SERMON III.

APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION AND THE
POWERS OF THE CLERGY.

MATT. xxviii. 18, 19, 20. “ And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world: Amen.”

HAD a traveller to trace out his path through some untrodden, perplexing, perilous wilderness—his safety and his life at stake, and were there placed in his hands, for the guidance of his steps, a map of infal-

lible accuracy; how much would it be-hove him, with all diligence and discern-ment, to take heed to its directions. But if there were also a guide provided for him, to aid and comfort him in his jour-ney; one, of whose claim and competency to do so he felt assured; ought he not thankfully to avail himself of such succour, and to submit himself frankly, but not blindly, to such seasonable guidance. We have already ascertained, that God hath vouchsafed to the pilgrim of faith, an uner-ring map to track the road which leads to the mansions of his Father's house. We have seen that every child of God is authorized and bound to use, in all humility, and simple affiance on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the chart which God has so graciously entrusted to him. We have now to take a further step, and to show you that it has seemed good to God, to call and commission spiritual guides, whose function it is to warn, and counsel, and strengthen, and comfort the heavenward

travellers, as they travel on through this “waste, howling wilderness.”

It is, surely, a point of much interest and moment, that we should be well assured, that those to whose guidance we commit ourselves have been rightly commissioned, as well as duly qualified, to lead the footsteps of the flock of Christ. Such is the subject which this evening asks for our serious and unbiassed attention. We hear perpetually, at the present juncture, of apostolical succession and the powers of the clergy. There *is* such a thing as apostolical succession, and, however exaggerated by some and misunderstood by others, it is not to be lightly regarded. There *are* such powers as the powers, or rather *the functions*, of the clergy, and these, however mischievously they have been magnified by some persons, are not to be repudiated or set aside. And since, as we have aforetime reminded you, beloved brethren, it is not so much our design in this course of instruction, to

demolish what is erroneous, as to establish what is true—to ground and settle your souls in sound principles, as the surest method of fencing and fortifying them against pernicious principles; acting on this purpose, we shall, in the present discussion, endeavour, in the first place, to prove to you that there is an apostolical succession in the christian ministry, which Scripture and our church hold, and that to such ministry there pertain certain special functions or immunities; we shall then, in the second place, briefly illustrate the extravagant and mischievous exaggerations which the Tractarian divines have propagated on these important topics. May the Spirit of love and wisdom be in the midst of us, that we may both find and follow the truth—find it in simplicity, and follow it in charity!

Fundamental to the investigation on which we are entering is the fact, that Christ has instituted a standing ministry in his church. On this point it might

seem almost gratuitous to enter into argument, for the evidence, in its favour, is so clear, that it was never doubted of amongst Christians, until latter times. Reason itself would lead us to infer, that if Christ designed to organize a community, there must be order, and if order, then officers. No less would reason teach us to anticipate, that if in the beginning of the christian dispensation authorized ministers were required, they would be equally requisite in subsequent ages. The very names employed in holy Scripture to designate the ministers of Christ, indicate the permanency of the institute. Are they stewards of God's mysteries? Then, so long as God has a household on earth, will there not be stewards in the family? Are they pastors of Christ's sheep? Then, so long as he has flocks in the wilderness, will they not need shepherds to tend them? Are they ambassadors for Christ, to beseech men to be reconciled to God? Then, so

long as there are sinners unreconciled, there must be ambassadors to persuade them to reconciliation. The words affixed to this discourse, containing as they do the great commission of Christ to his apostles, seem to us decisive on the question of the perpetuity of the christian ministry. For, in the first place, since the commission was,—“ Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ;” and since the work, to which the apostles were commissioned, has never yet to its full extent been accomplished, it follows that the commission, and therefore, the ministry must be still in force. And, in the next place, this reasoning is fully borne out by the promise annexed to the commission,—“ Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world ;” for, since this promise could not have its entire fulfilment in the apostles themselves, seeing they had

no earthly immortality, but, when they had “finished their course” and “the ministry they had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God,” were gathered to their fathers; it remains, that the promise must have contemplated a continuous and abiding ministry. How constantly the writings of the apostles recognize the same truth, needs not to be exemplified. We shall content ourselves with a single quotation from St. Paul. “How then,” he argues, (in treating of the unbelieving,) “how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed; and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a preacher; and how shall they preach except they be sent?” The preacher, therefore, and the sending of the preacher, he represents as necessary in order to the believing of the hearer; thus, so connecting the whole process in a beautiful chain, that no man has a right to break off one link, whilst he

professes to retain the rest. We need not, however, and we must not, enlarge on this preliminary topic ; because, though there be some mystical sects who have striven to set aside a standing and separate order of christian teachers, they are the offspring of modern times, few in number and feeble in argument, consequently, not demanding more lengthened notice. Suffice it to add, that the passages on which they chiefly rely in advocating their views are those which inculcate on *all* the members of Christ, the duty of being the “salt of the earth” and “the light of the world,” which enjoin upon *all* to set forth the glory of God by setting forward the salvation of others, and which teach that *all* are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.” Such passages, however, only prove what no Christian will gainsay, that all believers are, accord-

ing to their measure and in their vocation, to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, to be fellow-helpers to the truth, and to strive together for the well-being, present and eternal, of all their fellow-creatures. But it is obvious that these passages have no reference to the administration of the ordinances of Christ, or to the authoritative proclamation of the word of reconciliation, which the apostle asserts was “given” to the “ambassadors of Christ.”

The next step in the argument is the critical step; one of acknowledged delicacy, and no common difficulty. It is here that multitudes, who have so far travelled together, part company. That it is the will of Christ there should be a ministerial order in his church, the great body of Christians admit; but, upon the question of what provision he has made for the perpetuation of such an order, they are widely disagreed. That there must be such a provision follows, as a consequence, from the former proposition; be-

cause, in the absence of any provision, the purpose of Christ would be unsecured, and in peril of utter failure. Now, we believe that Christ has not indistinctly intimated, by his own language and conduct, by the acts and teaching of his apostles, and by the conduct and custom of his universal church, in the beginning, that he *has* provided for an authentic perpetuation of the christian ministry, and that he has *so* provided, by the appointment of the episcopal order,—as consequent upon, and, in many respects, equivalent to, the apostolical. In treating this theme, firmly but not exclusively, with boldness but not with bigotry, we must bespeak your calm, patient, and earnest attention.

It is clear that qualification for the pastoral office cannot, of itself, constitute any man a pastor. The converse has sometimes been asserted ; but to assert such a principle is to confound things essentially different. Qualification for office is one thing, right to

office, another. No subject, however admirably fitted to act as an ambassador, presumes on that account to assume to himself the function; he must first be commissioned by his king. Must not then the ambassador of Christ be deputed, as well as endowed, by the King of kings? We hold indeed, most earnestly hold, that qualification is of paramount importance; and that however a man may be outwardly designated to the ministerial office, if he be not duly qualified for it, by having been inwardly moved and called by the Holy Ghost, qualified, by soundness of doctrine and holiness of life, he is not in the spirit, however he may be in the letter, a messenger of Christ. Yet, we cannot admit that the fullest aptitude for the clerical function can entitle a man to assume that function; else, in reality, were there no security for the distinctness and continuance of the ministerial order. Every layman who felt or fancied himself to be specially endowed

and inclined for the work of the ministry, would be justified in looking upon himself as a minister. It follows, that, besides an inward and secret call from God, and those gifts which only He can bestow, there must be an outward and lawful vocation to the work, "by men who have public authority given them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard."

We proceed to prove, that the persons who, ordinarily, have such authority given them in the congregation of Christ, are the bishops of the church. In support of this opinion we would refer, in the first instance, to the precedent furnished by the Jewish Church—between which and the Christian, it is fully shown in the Epistle to the Hebrews, there exists an intimate analogy. Under the typical dispensation, the existence of subordination and diversity in the ecclesiastical orders, is too obvious to be denied. Nor is it unworthy of notice, that the orders under

the law were threefold, even as are the orders under the Gospel, the high priest, priest, and levite, answering to the bishop, priest, and deacon. In like manner, when Moses, as moved by God, added to the rulers of Israel, the same principle, of a disparity in rank, is still recognised; for he appointed twelve princes, and seventy elders. If these precedents, prove no more, they at least prove that inequality of order in the holy ministry, is not of itself unlawful, for God could not have instituted that which is wrong. Will it be retorted upon us, as may be expected?—"If you avail yourselves of the type in part, you must carry it out altogether, and so, conclude that there ought to be a successor to the Jewish high priest in the christianchurch; and thus, to be consistent, you must unite with the Romanist in maintaining the supremacy of the pope?" The argument we admit, but the inference we deny. To be consistent, we must maintain the supre-

macy of Christ, not of anti-Christ ; for our great high priest has not resigned or suspended his office; but, as St. Paul declares, “ He abideth an high priest for ever.” And again, “ Forasmuch as he continueth ever, he hath an unchangeable priesthood.” In the exercise of that blessed priesthood, he is continually engaged ; “ he ever liveth to make intercession for us.” “ Having, therefore, a great high priest over the house of God,” one who has assured us, “ Lo ! I am with you alway even to the end of the world,” we need have, and we can have, no other head.

Will it then be rejoined, “ If you set aside one feature of the analogy, what right have you to retain the rest ?” We answer, we do not set aside, we verify that feature ; and has not our abiding High Priest given us no indistinct sanction for following out the parallel ? For will any man say, that it was merely an undesigned, though singular coincidence, that when the Lord Jesus ordained his apostles, He

ordained twelve, corresponding to the twelve princes of Israel; and that when he chose his disciples, he chose seventy, corresponding to the seventy elders of Israel. Did not the Redeemer thus indicate, that so far from it being his intention that there should be a studied antagonism between the ritual of the Christian and the Jewish church, he rather designed that the former should coincide with the latter, as the substance with the shadow; and that we should, therefore, look upon the one as the developement and realization of the other?

It is of importance to our argument, that we should fasten attention on the fact to which we have thus adverted—the appointment by our Lord himself of two distinct orders in the ministry of his word, the one manifestly inferior to the other. In proof of this inferiority we need not do more than remind you of the difference in the call and commission of the two bodies, the largeness of the powers and privileges

conferred upon the apostles in comparison with those bestowed upon the seventy, and the prominent position which the former occupy in Scripture history, contrasted with the scanty notice taken of the latter. The closeness of fellowship with their master which the twelve were privileged to enjoy—the solemn manner in which they were constituted His witnesses, and, in some sort, his representatives after this departure, together with the extended authority with which they were ultimately invested, all these circumstances place it beyond a reasonable doubt, that the apostolical order was entirely paramount to that of the seventy, and that, consequently, Christ, while yet on earth, erected the platform of a ministry diversified in official degree.

After the withdrawal of the visible presence of the Lord, we find that the apostles had no sooner entered fully upon the exercise of the power with which he

had invested them, than they recognized and completed the distinction of order in the officers of the church, by the institution of a third class—the class of deacons. At so early a period in the annals of the primitive church, do we trace the great threefold difference of degree in the christian ministry, which we find perpetuated in our own church.

The fact that the twelve ultimately, as might have been anticipated, from the powers and instructions given them by the Lord, exercise a presiding authority—an episcopal supervision, over all the various branches of the church—that they were in effect its itinerating bishops, rests upon abundant evidence. We find that they not only did the work of evangelists, going everywhere and preaching the Gospel, as they had opportunity, to every creature, but that they also overlooked, controlled, and matured the churches which they had succeeded in planting, accomplishing this, either by means of periodical visitation, or by means

of their official epistles : so that to them it appertained, to correct abuses, apply reproofs, determine questions, enforce laws, administer discipline, and all this, even in churches where there were many pastors. By *them*, churches, founded by the labours of others, were confirmed. It was at the laying on of *their* hands the Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed. *They* ordained the deacons. *They* ordained elders in every church. In reality, they were the missionary bishops of the missionary church, whilst yet in her nascent, unfinished condition ; a state of things, in no small degree, paralleled at present, in the state of the infant branch of our own church which is scattered over the continent of India. Nor is the proof of the episcopal jurisdiction of the apostles at all weakened by the circumstance that it was not for the most part localized and stationary. The truth of the function does not depend on the accidents of its administration. There is not wanting, however, strong presumption

in support of the idea, that even amongst the apostles themselves, there existed a precedent for a localized, (and to speak by anticipation) diocesan, episcopacy. In the church at Jerusalem, the mother and model church ; the church, for a considerable time at least, the most established and extended of primitive churches, where there was a mighty multitude of believers and a goodly company of pastors—in this church, there is much scriptural ground for believing, the apostle St. James presided as bishop. This appears to be indicated at least, by the fact, that when St. Peter was delivered out of prison, he said to the disciples, “ Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren.” Why did he thus name James, and none save James ? Must it not have been because that apostle held a paramount position in the metropolitan church ? Subsequently, we have it recorded, that when St. Paul returned from his journeyings, he went in with his colleagues, “ unto James, and to the bre-

thren ;" why is James again singled out so specially ? Why was it to him in particular, that Paul repaired ? But a circumstance still more significant, not to say decisive, took place in the first council at Jerusalem, a council held for the purpose of determining the question, how far the converts from among the Gentiles were to conform to Jewish usages. On that august occasion, St. James, standing up, after the subject had been largely deliberated upon, wound up the deliberations of the council thus authoritatively :—" My sentence is, that we trouble not the Gentiles." Can it be denied that this is the language of one who spake as acknowledged president ? And on what ground did he preside, unless he was the apostolical bishop of Jerusalem ? What Scripture thus intimates is fully sustained by historical testimony — testimony scarcely less ample and explicit than that on the strength of which we admit that Nero was emperor of

Rome, and Pontius Pilate governor of Judea.

It will not avail an objector, to urge against this latter evidence, that the primitive writers used the word bishop as synonymous with presbyter, for most of the witnesses to whom we refer, wrote at a period when the sense of the former term had become fixed and restricted, so as to be used exclusively, in the sense in which it is now employed. Here, however, it may be well that we should digress a little, for the purpose of obviating the common and plausible argument against episcopacy, based on the ground that the scriptural terms which we render bishop and presbyter, were convertible terms. That such was the case we unhesitatingly grant; but we are reasoning about facts, not words. And will any man pretend to say, that the apostles were not of higher authority than the ordinary presbyters, because *these* are sometimes styled apostles, and *those* some-

times, presbyters? Nothing is more common than for words which had at one time a wide and general application, to be afterwards used in a restricted and specific sense; so has it come to pass, that the term apostle, at one time so general in its application, is now understood at once to designate one of the twelve. In like manner, the title episcopos, which was originally employed indiscriminately, to denote either an overseer of a single flock, or an overseer of many flocks, with their respective shepherds, came, at no distant period after the days of the apostles, to be appropriated to the designation of the latter office alone. We do not then, rest our argument in proof of primitive episcopacy, on names but on facts, and content ourselves with showing that the use of words cannot be fairly urged to invalidate our reasoning. Controversy about words is to beat the air. We, therefore, return from this digression, and

resume our appeal to the testimony of Scripture.

We have seen that the apostles exercised certain functions and prerogatives peculiar to themselves ; that they governed the church, confirmed believers, and ordained pastors. We must now take a further step, and endeavour to satisfy you that they designed that those functions and prerogatives should be held and wielded by other ministers, in continuation from themselves. This link in our reasoning is a very essential one, because, were it wanting, it might fairly be inferred, that the episcopate terminated with the apostles, and belonged to them, in virtue of their preternatural gifts, and not as an institution intended to be permanent in the church. Let us have recourse then, to the evidence which may be gathered from the apostolical epistles on this delicate point. In those epistles we cannot but notice this broad distinction—the greater

number of them are addressed to entire churches; three of them, exclusively, to individuals.* Now we pray you, carefully to note, that in the former class of epistles, there is an entire absence of all instruction on, what may be styled, strictly episcopal subjects; no directions are given on the vital head of the selection, probation, and ordination of ministers, no rules supplied for the regulation and control of presbyters; yet it is not that ecclesiastical arrangements, or the reciprocal duties of pastor and people are wholly overlooked, for on these topics we meet with neither unfrequent nor scanty information. How is it, then, that on kindred points, of equal, not to say paramount concernment, we find so entire a silence? Would this—could this have been the case, had it been designed, that either the people,

* In this general classification, we do not feel it necessary to advert particularly to the two or three very brief epistles addressed by St. Paul and St. John to particular persons.

or the ordinary elders, or both these combined, should call and commission the ambassadors of Christ, or exert over them authentic jurisdiction? Is not this silence, to say the least of it, highly expressive? Does it not furnish the strongest negative evidence, that the powers in question were not committed, either to Christians or to christian ministers in general, but were reserved to a separate order?

This indirect proof is greatly strengthened when viewed in connexion with the positive proof supplied by the three epistles addressed to individuals—those to Timothy and Titus. In these we at once perceive a widely different tenor of instruction. The persons addressed are addressed clearly, as invested with high official authority. They are instructed minutely, how to overlook, organize, and discipline the churches committed to their charge—how to test, approve, and ordain presbyters and deacons. Let any one

search these epistles with an unbiassed mind, and then say whether he can avoid drawing the conclusion, that the persons to whom they were addressed, must have wielded special and paramount authority in their respective churches. Nor can it be pleaded in arrest of such conclusion, that probably they were the sole pastors of those churches. Such could not have been the case; for we know that in the church at Ephesus, before Timothy was stationed there, there was a goodly company of pastors, who met St. Paul at Miletus, and to whom he delivered his farewell charge, in anticipation that it would be the last that he, as the general bishop of the Gentile churches, should address to the pastors of that portion of the flock of Christ. Besides this, we find both Timothy and Titus expressly directed as to the manner in which they should treat the presbyters, and as to the jurisdiction which they were to exercise over them. Of course, therefore, there must have been elders, over whom they presided. The

presidency of Timothy is emphatically intimated in the passage where he is directed, "against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." Equally explicit is the evidence involved in the instruction given him, to "charge some (presbyters) that they teach no other doctrine." In like manner, Titus was appointed "to set in order the things that were wanting" in the church at Crete. He was also, authorized "to stop the mouths" of "unruly and vain talkers and deceivers," "teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake." And as it is clear that these primitive bishops were empowered to govern their churches, so it is yet clearer that they were endued with the prerogative of ordination. Timothy is fully instructed what qualifications he must require in candidates for the ministry, and he is cautioned to "lay hands suddenly on no man." Does not this language assume that he had authority to ordain—an authority which we nowhere find ascribed to the ordinary presbyter? Indeed,

we may safely challenge the adduction of a single example in the whole New Testament, of the ordination of a pastor, either by the people, or by a simple presbyter, or by several such presbyters without a superior officer. In the case of Titus, the proof that he ordained, is equally decisive; for the apostle declares that he left him in Crete, to “ordain elders in every city.” Let these words be weighed. If there were not aforetime, elders in the Christian church, then Titus *alone* ordained: if there were, what need was there that he should have been deputed for the express purpose of ordaining?

Against all this reasoning, however, it is held by many, that a fatal objection is found, in one of these very epistles, for that Timothy himself is exhorted, — “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presberty.” Hence it is alleged, that he must have been ordained by presbyters. But

let it not be forgotten, that he was also admonished, to “stir up” the gift of God which was in him, by the putting on of Paul’s hands.” It is clear, therefore, that Timothy was ordained by the apostle, however the presbytery may have concurred in the act. The mode of expression employed, distinctly conveys this idea. In speaking of the ordination of Timothy, by himself, St. Paul represents the gift, as conveyed *by* the putting on of his hands: when he speaks of the gift in connexion with the presbytery, the language he uses is, “*with* the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” These prepositions, in the original as well as in the translation, have a different force; “*by*,” signifying immediate agency, “*with*,” co-operative, or concurrent agency. Granting, therefore, that certain presbyters did, concurrently with St. Paul, lay hands on Timothy, this does not affect the conclusion, that it was the agency of *the apostle* which gave validity to the ordination. Our own scrip-

tural church, keeping close in this, as in other particulars, to apostolic example, provides that in the ordination of priests, presbyters shall be present, who shall lay their hands along with those of the bishop on the head of the person being ordained; not as thereby conferring orders, but simply as concurring in the solemn act. So carefully does the church of England obviate every scruple and exception; so exactly does she conform to the primitive model!

For the purpose of evading the force of the chain of evidence in support of diocesan episcopacy drawn from the cases of Timothy and Titus, it is contended, that the functions which they exercised, the one in Ephesus and the other in Crete, were at most but temporary functions; because we have no proof that they abode in their posts, but rather, that after a period, they journeyed elsewhere. Could this be substantiated, it would not shake the fact that they did, for a season at

least, wield episcopal power ; and this, after all, is the most material point. But we do not admit that what is so commonly assumed, is more than assumption. The journeyings of Timothy with St. Paul were nearly, if not wholly, anterior to his location in Ephesus. Nor does the fact, that the apostle summoned these primitive bishops to meet him at a distance from their respective spheres, in anywise warrant the inference that they did not return to those spheres, or that their connexion with them was not of a permanent character. Absence from their dioceses, even though repeated, especially if for the purpose of conference and co-operation with him who had placed them in authority, and under whose supreme control they must still have acted, would surely, be quite compatible with the continuance of their episcopal rule.

Supplemental evidence in support of the view which we are endeavouring to establish, is furnished in the epistles

addressed by our blessed Redeemer to the seven churches in Asia, and that at a period when those churches must have been fully organized and settled. This evidence is derived from the circumstance, that each of these epistles is addressed to *the angel* of the church, and not to the presbyters or to the church in general, except *through* the individual so singled out. Have we not here a clear indication, that the person thus selected, and made the channel of communication to the body of the church, must have presided over his church and been acknowledged as the president? On what other supposition can we account for the peculiarity which characterizes these letters, sent from heaven? True it is, that in some of them, the singular form of address is partially exchanged for the plural: but this, occurring as it does, only in a few digressions, where the body of the church is more directly addressed, does not at all invalidate the argument which we have adduced. Did, however,

the point admit of question, the Redeemer himself decides the doubt, when he declares, “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.” It would, therefore, be monstrous to confound what he has so clearly distinguished, and to represent the star and the candlestick, the angel and the church, as identical. It is further worthy of note, that the epistles to the angels of the seven churches, furnish many proofs that the persons designated, possessed authority and jurisdiction over their respective churches. A fact intimated also, in the representation given of our Lord, as *holding* the seven stars in his hand, whilst *walking* in the midst of the golden candlesticks. The latter he watches and pervades, the former he elevates and upholds. On the whole, then, so strong is the evidence thus supplied, that it is no marvel it should have led the learned and candid Grotius, though not himself an episcopa-

lian, to acknowledge its force in favour of episcopacy.

Descending from scriptural ground, let us now touch, though transiently, on the ground of historical testimony. In its proper place, this foundation of proof is in nowise to be contemned. We took occasion, in our second discourse, to distinguish carefully, between the early ecclesiastical writers, viewed as authorities in doctrine, and regarded as witnesses of facts. Why should not *their* records be esteemed truthful and trustworthy, as well as the histories of Livy or Josephus? And why should not their testimony on any historical question, be deemed decisive? But, it is on a simple matter of fact we make our appeal to them, when we consult them for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not diocesan episcopacy originated in primitive times and prevailed generally in the early church. On both these points their affirmative testimony

may be said to be ample and unanimous. Whether we refer to the earliest fathers, as Clement, Ignatius, and Irenæus, or to the later, as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Clemens Alexandrinus, all of them concur in witnessing that episcopacy prevailed in their days, and that they derived it from apostolic times. There may, indeed, be some few instances indicated by them, in which it is not clear that bishops were immediately appointed, to supply the places of those whom we have already designated the itinerating bishops of the church, —the holy apostles; but such cases, if any, were rare, and constituted the exception, not the rule.

We can distinctly show the date and origin of those forms of church government which set aside episcopacy; and we may fairly challenge such persons as deny that this institute was originated by the apostles, to show us how and when it began. Admit that it had apostolical

origin, and there is no difficulty in accounting for its prevalency—its universality: but how can you account for this, if you repudiate that supposition? Had it not been a primitive ordinance, how could a revolution, so deep and vast as must have been occasioned by its after introduction into the churches, have been accomplished without opposition, without record, and without notice? It will not suffice to answer, that it stole in imperceptibly, as did many other ecclesiastical errors and abuses; for there is no prominent error or abuse, no general change in the church, though immensely inferior in magnitude to that which a transformation in the entire constitution of the church must have been, which we cannot trace to its origin, and prove to have been protested against, and withstood. So with regard to papal usurpations, the worship of images, transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, and all the other innovations of Popery. But can any man

do the same in reference to episcopacy? Can he point out the epoch, posterior to the apostles, when this (as some would have it) enormous innovation arose? Can he prove that it was protested against and resisted? The universality of episcopal government and episcopal ordination in the church, up to the period of the Reformation, is a stubborn fact; a fact by no means impaired by the circumstance of a few schismatical, and for the most part ephemeral, bodies, having at different times, detached themselves from the early church, and sacrificed, rather than repudiated, episcopacy. To what branch of the early church can you turn, where you do not find our case exemplified? If you turn to the Waldensian church, to the Bohemian church, the Russian, the Greek, the Armenian, the Nestorian, or the Abyssinian, still you encounter episcopacy. But a very little time ago, a new and deeply interesting illustration of our point, has been developed on the coast of Malabar, in the

Syrian churches; churches which never bowed beneath the papal yoke, nor shared in the wide-spread apostacy. These enjoy, and have retained, their episcopal order uninvaded and unbroken from the times of the apostles, and express amazement at the notion of churches denuded of the primitive institute. Surely, then, the universal prevalence of diocesan episcopacy in all the churches of antiquity, stands forth as a powerful presumption in favour of its apostolicity, for how could it have so prevailed unless it had been from the beginning?

We conclude, therefore, brethren, that the argument in support of episcopacy and of episcopal ordination—founded on Scripture, attested by history—and confirmed by fact—is quite sufficient to satisfy any fair and unbiassed mind. For my own part, my convictions on the point have been so clear, even from my childhood upwards, that, however I might

have humbly trusted, that I was disposed and qualified for the work of the ministry, I could not, under ordinary circumstances, have dared to minister in holy things, unless I had been commissioned and ordained in accordance with my convictions.

We proposed, in the next place, to define the powers, or rather, the functions, with which the duly-constituted ministers of Christ are invested. The expression, *functions* of the clergy, is far preferable to the expression, *powers*; *this* tending to fix their attention on their authority, *that* on their duty; and there can be no doubt which is the soundest and safest view. To a lowly minister of the lowly Redeemer who came not to be ministered unto but to minister—to one who is ready to be the servant of all men for their profit, the very notion of power is startling; he would rather dwell on the idea of responsibility. But, functions, special and

appropriate functions, the clergy assuredly have. They are chiefly comprehended in the charge addressed to the apostles—“ Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The public preaching of Christ’s gospel, the administration of the holy sacraments, the declaration of absolution and forgiveness to the penitent and believing, the overseeing and directing, of the body of the faithful—these are the peculiar offices of the clerical order;—offices which others ought not to usurp, and which plainly imply a measure of spiritual authority. This authority the Scriptures both recognize and enforce. Thus the apostle, St. Paul writes to the Hebrew church—“ Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give ac-

count." In like manner, speaking to the Corinthians, of some who had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, he says—"I beseech you, brethren, that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth." So, also, in his epistle to the Galatians, he writes—"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."—Such passages as these, distinctly indicate a measure of power on the part of the pastor of the flock,—and a measure of submission on the part of the people. But, as for the exorbitant powers which some would arrogate for the bishops and presbyters of Christ, such as to absolve, unconditionally, from sin,—"to *make* the body and blood of Christ,"—"to open and shut the gates of heaven;" these assumptions are alike in the face of sober reason, scripture testimony, and the spirit of our church. The true honour of the ambassador of Christ is to be sought, in the faithfulness with which

he conforms to the instructions of his Lord, in the power with which he testifies the word of truth, in the blamelessness of his character, the eminency of his holiness, and the witness which the Holy Ghost gives to his ministry—in sinners converted and saints renewed. Even the great apostle of the Gentiles, who was called to be an apostle by the Lord from heaven, witnesses of those who were the fruits of his ministrations, “Ye are the seal of mine apostleship.” But, if *he* thus looked upon the results of his ministry as the crown and attestation of his office, how ill does it beseem those who make their boast of authority derived from the apostles, to stand exclusively, on what they conceive to be the apostolicity of their commission, whilst they overlook or lightly regard the effects of their labours! That minister will best assert and uphold the sacredness and dignity of his function, who does so, not by word, but by deed,

not by elaborate inculcation of his official authority, but by making it felt that he is a messenger of God.

It were delightful to enlarge on this congenial theme, but it is time that we should advert to some of the extravagant notions on the subjects of episcopacy and clerical power, which are so sedulously propagated by a party in our church. They lay it down as a principle, that episcopacy is a fundamental matter. Hence, they inculcate the doctrine of "apostolical succession as a rule of practice," i. e. that the participation of the body and blood of Christ is essential to the maintenance of life and hope in each individual. That it is conveyed to individual Christians *only* by the hands of the successors of the apostles and their delegates. That the successors of the apostles are those who are descended in a direct line from them by the imposition of hands: and that the delegates of these

are the respective presbyters, whom each has commissioned.* As a consequence from these daring assumptions, it is inferred, that our church is “the only church in this realm which has a right to be quite sure that she has the Lord’s body to give to his people.”† On the same ground, it is boldly asserted, that “A person, not commissioned from the bishop, may use the words of baptism, and sprinkle, or bathe with water on earth, but there is no promise from Christ that such a man shall admit souls to the kingdom of heaven. A person not commissioned may break bread and pour out wine, and pretend to give the Lord’s Supper, but it can afford *no comfort* to any to receive it at his hands, because there is no warrant from Christ to lead communicants to suppose that while he does so here on earth, they will be partakers of the Saviour’s heavenly body and blood. And as for

* App. to Perceval’s Letter to Dr. Arnold, p. 37.

† Tract 4, p. 5.

the person who takes upon himself without warrant to minister in holy things, he is all the while treading in the footsteps of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.* Now, thus to make the doctrine of episcopacy an essential doctrine and to attach such consequences to the lack of a duly ordained ministry, is inevitably to shut out from salvation (although some who hold the premises fear to follow them out into their startling consequence,) all who are not members of an episcopal communion. But dare any man, calling himself a Christian, adjudge those of whom it is evident that they "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" those who bring forth largely the fruit of holiness in their lives; those on whom God hath set the seal of his acceptance and adoption, who are manifestly declared to be new creatures in Christ—old things having passed away, and all things become new in them,—dare any man adjudge such to be shut out from the

* Tract 85, p. 3.

presence of God, simply because they lack (it may be through ignorance or unavoidable privation) the privilege and benefit of episcopacy? Is this the spirit of holy Scripture? Is this the catholicity of the gospel?

But let us meet these monstrous assumptions in another way. Without doubt, were the doctrine in debate, of such vital moment, it would have been laid down broadly in the word of God. There is not an article of faith essential to the soul's health, which we do not find unequivocally propounded in the Bible. Such truths as that of the Trinity in Unity, the twofold natures in the person of Christ, the innate corruption of man, our justification through faith in Christ, our new birth and sanctification by the Holy Ghost, the necessity of good works as evidences of a living faith, and witnesses in the day of judgment,—these are written in the page of revelation, with such plainness, that he who runs may read them. But is

it so with the doctrine of episcopacy ? With all our zeal for its maintenance, we can nowhere find in holy Scripture, a direct, dogmatical inculcation of it as an article of the Christian faith. We find enough, in apostolical precedent, in primitive usage, and in universal order, to warrant; nay, we conceive, to enforce, our conscientious adhesion to an episcopal church, where that church maintains the truth ; but we do not find anything which authorizes us to demand the same adhesion at the hand of others, on peril of their souls. Repentance, faith, obedience—these are clearly constituted conditions of acceptance with God, but not so, the possession of an episcopal ministry. And shall *we* presume to be more exclusive than God, or to make the strait gate narrower, than he has made it ? Can we not hold that episcopacy is necessary to the *prosperity*, without holding that it is essential to the *existence* of a church ? So held our martyred Reformers, as their

writings, and especially, their letters (recently published by a valuable and seasonable society) abundantly show. So far were they from anathematizing or excommunicating the continental churches which at the Reformation, either forfeited or set aside episcopacy, that they held intimate and endearing fellowship with them; regarding their soundness in the faith, as immeasurably more than counterbalancing their deficiency in order. Together with their uncompromising maintenance of the apostolical constitution of our church, our illustrious forefathers cherished that spirit of magnanimous catholicity, which led them to love as a brother every true disciple of the Saviour, in whatever communion they might discover him, or however they might be compelled to deem him, in subordinate matters, mistaken. It was the same spirit of wise and holy moderation which actuated them, when, in drawing up "the form or manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of bishops,

priests, and deacons," they, in their prefatory remarks, thus temperately expressed themselves—" It is evident to all men diligently reading the holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's church ; bishops, priests, and deacons. Which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same ; and also by public prayer, with imposition of hands, were approved and admitted thereto by lawful authority."

As the Tractarian writers are so extreme in their views of the indispensableness of episcopacy, so are they no less extravagant in the power and dignity which they arrogate to the hierarchy. What, for instance, can be more startling than the following position,—“ We may be as sure that a bishop is the representative of Christ

as if he saw the cloven tongues of fire sitting on his head, bespeaking the Holy Ghost as descended upon him." What then!—are we to look upon every bishop of the Church of Rome, holding as he must, perilous, not to say, destructive error, are we to look upon *him* as having the Holy Spirit resting upon him as truly as if we saw the symbol of the divine presence? Were it not bordering on blasphemy against the Comforter, so to identify him with teaching directly at variance with his own revelation, and with superstitions altogether abhorrent to his nature? Scarcely less offensive, is the language used respecting the clerical order in general. They are spoken of as having "the awful and mysterious power of making the body and blood of Christ;" "as authoritatively," not declaratively, "remitting or retaining sin;" as "wielding the keys of the kingdom of God," and as "opening and shutting the kingdom of heaven." Than the first of these assumptions, it is hard to say

what could be more irreverent or profane —for it represents the creature as making the Creator. Of the other dogmas it must be admitted, that there are two or three passages of Scripture which may be so wrested as to seem to support them. But, without entering into any close investigation of those passages, (which time forbids,) suffice it to say, that their primary, pre-eminent, we do not say exclusive, reference, was to the apostles themselves; and even in their case, they related to the power and effects of the Gospel as ministered by them, rather than to any personal or official authority. True it is, that, in the ordination of presbyters, our church employs language, drawn from holy Scripture, in a manner that would seem to contravene this view of the subject. We allude to those solemn words used by the bishop when laying his hands on the head of the person whom he is ordaining—" Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the church of God,

now committed unto thee by the imposition of hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven ; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." This we grant, is exceedingly strong ; and, since such language is liable to misconstruction and was not employed in the most primitive forms of ordination, it is perhaps to be regretted that it was not somewhat modified. Yet, surely, it is not unfairly to force the former of these expressions, to regard it as a simple assurance, addressed to the meet recipient of the ministerial function, that the special grace of the Holy Spirit is covenanted to him in sustaining and discharging the overwhelming responsibilities of that function. And who, duly prepared for the sacred office, would venture to undertake it, did he not anticipate such special assistance ? As it regards the latter clause of the sentence, it is only reasonable to arrive at its import, by connecting it with the general teaching and practice of our church on

the subject of absolution. The form of absolution embodied in her daily services, is simply declaratory, and recognises none as a recipient of pardon, who does not truly repent and unfeignedly believe the divine promises. The form of absolution in the communion service, is to the same effect. The only one, therefore, which can give rise to difference of opinion, is the form of absolution in the service for the visitation of the sick. In this instance, the language is confessedly, strong and positive. But it is clear that the church intended it should be used, only in case of the satisfactory profession of repentance and faith on the part of the person visited, and in case he "humbly and heartily desire it." Hence we infer, that it cannot be regarded as an unconditional and authoritative absolution, but as proceeding on the supposition that the individual to whom it is addressed, is in the sight of God, what he appears to be in the sight of men. Consequently, after all, it is by implication

at least, hypothetical and declaratory. Whilst then, we admit that some of the expressions employed by the church in connexion with the clerical order, are not very measured, we deny that they furnish any countenance to those inflated views of priestly power and efficacy, which some that still linger within the precincts of our church, are striving to fasten upon her.

Equally unsanctioned by holy Scripture and the Church of England is the blind submission which the Tractarian school demand from the laity towards the clerical order; as though, in spiritual matters, the former must be passive and plastic in the hands of the latter. How diverse the tone of the great apostle to the Gentiles! He speaks of himself and his fellow labourers, in relation to their converts on this wise, "Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy;" and again he declares, "We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants, for

Jesus' sake." In like manner, St. Peter addresses the elders, "not as being lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock." Is it possible to bring these sentiments into harmony with the arrogant assumptions of the priests and prelates of the middle ages? Or, we must sorrowfully add, with the lordly style so fondly employed by some of our own clergy, who seem to dwell more complacently on apostolical succession, than on apostolical doctrine? Much need have episcopal ministers to beware of this rock of offence. Whilst we talk of magnifying our office, let us take heed lest our object be to magnify ourselves. Knowledge of human nature would lead us to expect, what ecclesiastical history fully exemplifies, that the tendency of an episcopal church is towards spiritual despotism, and, consequently, that it behoves an episcopal clergy specially to watch and pray against being entangled in this snare of the devil. Neither ought they to forget, that the peculiarity of their

position exposes them the more to such a besetment. Severed as they are from secular pursuits, the tempting baits which allure the covetous and worldly layman, are comparatively out of *their* reach ; but the measure of deference and submission which their very office is fitted to secure to them in their own sphere of duty, lays them open in a special manner to the blandishments of ambition. From the lust of power, therefore,—that lust so deeply engrained in the heart of fallen man ; that strongest incentive to the apostacy of our first parents, they have most to fear. And the rather because, whilst covetousness and sensuality are usually the besetments of the unrefined, ambition most commonly assails the sensitive and cultivated mind. How deeply then, does it concern the ministers of our church to tremble, lest in vindicating their office, and asserting even its just and moderate claims, they should be betrayed into unguarded language, or tempted to raise up a pedestal

for self. It surely becomes them to be no less zealous in maintaining the rights and privileges of those whom St. Paul describes as "God's building," "God's husbandry," than of those whom he represents as "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."

We confess, brethren, that we are jealous on your behalf. We would no more have the clergy encroach upon the laity, than the laity upon the clergy. Our church is so far from shutting out the laity from due participation in ecclesiastical matters, that she has carefully provided for such participation. Although she does not sanction the popular election of her ministers, a method which can hardly fail to generate divisions, heart-burnings, and tumults, she clearly designs that her lay members should hold a negative in the selection of her pastors. This is evident from the requirement, in the case of every candidate for holy orders, of what is technically termed the "si quis,"

which is an appeal to the people, as to the character of the individual; and so also, at the time of ordination, the bishop challenges the assembled congregation to allege, if they know, any just cause or impediment why the candidates severally should not be invested with the holy function. On either of these occasions, therefore, it is competent for laymen, nay more, it is binding upon them, if they possess evidences of unfitness against any aspirant to the sacred office, to interpose and prevent his ordination. Nor does the wholesome check thus put into the hands of the laity, cease upon the ordination of the clergy; for in the case of every minister charged with a cure of souls, the people have the power, through the medium of the churchwardens, as has been conclusively shown by the excellent Chancellor of this diocese, to convey their complaints against him, either for inconsistency of conduct, or for erroneousness in doctrine, to the bishop of the diocese, on whom

it is incumbent to entertain and investigate such complaints. In all this, how happy the medium kept between sacerdotal despotism on the one hand, and democratic usurpation on the other! Let the constitution of our church be fairly studied and fully understood in all its parts and proportions; let the candid mind contemplate the church as it might be, rather than as it is; in its goodly plan, rather than in its imperfect execution; and it will be impossible to withhold from it the meed of admiration. What is wanted is not to revolutionize the system, but that the laity and the clergy should alike carry out the system into full efficiency.

It is now time, christian brethren, that we should bring this discussion, imperfectly as we have been forced through lack of time to conduct it, to a speedy conclusion. Suffer then, the word of admonition. See that you hold your ecclesiastical views with charity and forbearance, no less than with firmness and deci-

sion. On this topic we shall have occasion in a future discourse, to dwell at large ; yet we cannot pass it over without notice on the present occasion, lest, unhappily, bitterness and bigotry, instead of thankfulness, humility, and love, should be the fruit of our reasoning. Let me remind you that our concern is, not to judge those who follow not with us, but to judge our own selves, that we be not ungrateful or unfaithful in the fruition of our privileges. Let us not presume to say of others, that they are unconscientious or insincere, however we may believe them to be misinformed and perverted. Let us love the christian, *as such*, wherever we find him—the image of our Saviour, in whatever metal it may be set. Let us cherish largeness, generosity, and catholicity of spirit. Let the language of our lips and our lives be, “ Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity.”

At the same time, whilst we would not

dare to unchurch, much less to unchristianize, those who are sound in doctrine, but lack the signal benefit of a primitive episcopacy and a duly commissioned ministry ; whilst we would not take it upon ourselves to command such to hold their peace, since St. Paul declared that he rejoiced that Christ was preached even of strife and envy ; we cannot forbear reminding those who have either deserted our national church, or are in danger of deserting her, that such desertion is not a light matter. For a man to detach himself from a branch of the christian church, so apostolical in order, as well as scriptural in doctrine as our own, and thus to increase the schism and division, which constitute pre-eminently, the weakness, calamity, and reproach of our faith,—the stumbling-block of the weak, and the target of the infidel,—this must be, ought to be, a serious step. It cannot be otherwise in the view of any man who yearns after unity and sighs to see the prayer of his Saviour fulfilled, for

his disciples to be so visibly one, that the world may believe that the Father sent him.

And on you, fellow churchmen, we would earnestly urge, that you do not lightly esteem the apostolicity of the order, and the authenticity of the ministry which you enjoy. Be assured, that the more these questions are sifted, the more will the strength of the argument in support of such order and ministry be acknowledged. So has it been in the case of many who were themselves members of unepiscopal communions. We could adduce the candid admissions of several such witnesses, to show how powerful, and indeed unanswerable, they felt, were the evidences in favour of episcopacy. Rest assured too, that of the apostolical succession of orders in our church, there is proof enough to satisfy your minds. Not indeed, that your bishops and clergy succeed, as some would have it, to the full dignity and function of the apostles; we have not their miracles, their inspiration,

their discernment of spirits,—these things we neither need nor covet in these latter days ; yet are we not, therefore, shaken in the conviction, that our ostensible commission, to minister in holy things, has come down to us in continuous transmission from the first founders of the christian church. If we be challenged to trace up every link in an unbroken chain to the apostles themselves, and if we be told that to do so is impossible, we are content to reply, Is there a landholder in our country, whose family estate has descended to him from the time of the Norman conquest, who can produce every trust-deed, and exhibit every document relating to his property, throughout its protracted descent ? Yet, if he possess the inheritance, and if he can authenticate his title up to a remote antiquity, who thinks of disputing his claim ? And is he not protected in his estate by the law of the land ? So it ought to be, for how few things admit of anything like demonstra-

tion ; moral evidence is the foundation of nearly all that we believe. If, therefore, the primate of England can trace up his tenure of office, through his various predecessors, to the period of the Reformation, and from that epoch, upwards to the primitive day when the see of Canterbury was first constituted,—if he can do all this, (adducing the very names of those who preceded him in office,) with as much of likelihood and exactitude, as our more ancient nobility can follow out their ancestry, and vindicate their inheritances, is not this enough to satisfy a friend, if not to silence an antagonist ? Will it be said then, that by passing through the foul channel of Rome, our orders became invalid ? Let it be remembered, that though in the Jewish church there were many impious, yea, idolatrous high-priests, and sometimes a succession of such, yet did not the order or the office become, on that account, annulled. Nor let it be forgotten, that

our orders were derived from the apostolic church, long before popery was developed; that there were bishops of the Church of England at the council of Arles, centuries before Augustin the monk visited our shores; and that, consequently, we do not owe our succession, as we do not owe our doctrines, to the Church of Rome. We contend, therefore, that although our orders were brought into combination with those of Rome, when Rome brought our free-born church into subjection to her yoke, yet, that when at the Reformation we discarded at once the usurpation and the heresies of the papal power, we did not, by returning to primitive truth, forfeit our claim to primitive orders. On the whole then, let it content a simple-minded churchman to know that the ministers who minister to him the word and sacraments of Christ, have been externally called and commissioned to do so, in accordance with apostolical order; and that if also, they were not dissemblers

with God when they declared that they trusted they were moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them their ministry ; and if, when they speak, they speak as the oracles of God then may he enjoy the comfortable assurance,—that in hearing them, he virtually hears their Master, and in receiving the ordinances of Christ at their hand, he in effect receives them from the hand of his Saviour ;—the voice is human but the word is divine ; the vessel is earthen but the treasure is heavenly, and the appointment is of God.

Far be it from us, however, to betray you into a fond and ruinous reliance on the ministry which you enjoy ; this would be to bring upon you the curse denounced against him, “ who trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm ;” would be to make you “ like the heath in the desert,” barren and blighted, however richly the dew may fall on every hand. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God must give the increase. Beware, then, that you do not

substitute an apostolic ministry for that holy Spirit without whom apostles themselves would have ministered in vain. Even from the lips of angels, the word of God would come to you “in word only,” unless accompanied by the power and demonstration of the Spirit. Churches, sacraments, preaching,—these are but the golden pipes to convey the living waters ; the fountain itself is wholly with God. Take heed, therefore, that you neither idolize nor contemn the ministers of Christ. Do not contemn them, for St. Paul saith, “ We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” Do not idolize them, else you will come under the rebuke of the same apostle, as addressed to the Corinthian church,—“ For while one says I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal ?” Let not, therefore, your deference degenerate into servility,

nor your liberty run into licentiousness. Receive the word of God with meekness and pure affection, but take heed that it is *the very word of God* you receive. “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Yea, and though they speak as the oracles of God,—lose sight of the minister in his Master, and of the messenger in the message which he delivers.

SERMON IV.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE REFORMATION.

JEREMIAH vi. 16.—Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

It has always been the lot of those who have striven to maintain that moderation in their christian views which ought to characterize the disciple of Christ, to become objects of dislike and opposition to persons of extreme opinions on either hand. For however error may hate antagonist error, it always more hates antagonist truth. So it fared with Him who

was himself “ the Truth ;”—the formal Pharisee and the faithless Sadducee, opposed inveterately to each other, were still more inveterately opposed to Him. They could forget their mutual animosities in their bitter enmity against our Lord. Those who had no other point of union, were united by their hatred of the truth. The one party loathed Him for his spirituality, the other for the devotion, self denial, and purity of his doctrine and life. As it befel our blessed Master, so has it befallen our own reformed and faithful church. It is her lot to incur the hostility of extremes on every side. She is bitterly assailed by the latitudinarian because she is so uncompromising : she is no less bitterly attacked by the bigot because she is so temperate. Some of her own sons, who have been of a sceptical turn of mind, have blamed her for the stringency of her articles and confessions : others of them, who have had a superstitious and Romanizing tendency, have found fault

with her as not being stringent enough ; —or, as they insidiously style it, by a strange perversion of language, not “catholic” enough. Be it so. If she shares such antagonistic antipathy with the Master whose name she bears, she may well rather glory in, than blush at her reproach. She may take it as a sign that she holds the truth in moderation and simplicity ; since, in consequence of so holding it, she has to undergo the onsets of the extravagant, on either hand.

It is on the character of our church, and of her reformation from Popery, that we are, according to arrangement, to discourse this evening. Having already striven to prove that it is your right and duty to exercise in the service of God, the reason and conscience with which he has endued you ; having laboured to establish your minds in the conviction that there is one only infallible standard by which you must prove all things ; having endeavoured to satisfy you that the mi-

nisters of our church are, if faithful to their high vocation, authorized and authentic guides, to aid you in your christian course; it follows that we should now do our best to make it clear to you, that the church of our fathers has strong claims upon your confidence, and that you should not suffer yourselves to be estranged from her communion, by any fond notion that you will find a better or a safer pale than hers. May the Holy Ghost be in the midst of us, to enable us to hear and receive the truth with meekness and simplicity; that so, we may hold it with firmness, yet temper our firmness with charity.

It is said of our church, not only by her open enemies, which we might expect, but by her false friends, who betray her with a kiss, that she is the offspring of Rome; that she consequently owes allegiance (though it is uncertain to what amount) to the Roman pontiff, that she ought not to be in a state of

separation from the Papal church, and that so long as she abides in that condition she is guilty of schism. All this, and more than this, may be gathered from the writings of those misguided divines, whose names we need not adduce, whose errors we have so often to deplore. In the face of such insinuations, it will be our aim, christian brethren, to make it clear to your minds, that the church of our fathers is *a primitive* branch of Christ's holy church; that she, therefore, owed and owes no submission to the mitred usurper at Rome, but claims to be one of that free-born sisterhood of churches which collectively constitute the catholic church of the Redeemer, and are subject to no head save the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. This is our first position; and in order to satisfy you that this position can be maintained, our appeal must of necessity be to the testimony of ecclesiastical history. Let it not be said, that such illustration is not befitting the

sanctity of the sabbath ; for, surely, the history of a branch of the christian church, and especially of the branch to which we belong, is capable of being made no less edifying than interesting ; and, surely, he deserves not the name of churchman, who is not wishful to be informed and established on a point which so much concerns him.

The church of Britain was not planted by Rome ; therefore, so far, at least, she is independent of Rome. Even had Rome *founded* her, it would not follow that Rome has a right to exercise authority over her. All churches may be said to have emanated from the church at Jerusalem—the mother church of the world—but had the church at Jerusalem, on that account, dominion over their faith, or did she exert any influence over them, other than that of an elder sister ? But the Anglican church is not the child of the Roman. She was founded, there is

much reason to suppose, almost, if not altogether, as early as the church which assumes to be her parent. Dissertations and disputes have been multiplied touching the messenger who was employed by Christ to introduce Christianity and organize a church in our land. Into these controversies we shall not enter, because, however interesting, they do not materially affect our argument. Suffice it to say, that there is strong presumptive evidence, such as amounts to a high degree of likelihood, that it was none other than the great apostle of the Gentiles, (of whom early records witness—that he preached the gospel, “even to the utmost bounds of the west,”) who gathered the first fruits of Britain into the garner of the church. At all events, there are few points, in the earliest ecclesiastical history, more abundantly proved, than that the gospel visited our country during the lifetime of the apostles. The year 61 is the date most

generally agreed upon as the birthtime of our church. At that period, she is reported to have had her bishop, and the individual designated, is Aristobulus, whose name occurs in the epistle to the Romans. Nor is there wanting accumulated evidence to show that the scion of the spiritual vine, transplanted to our shores, took deep root and stretched forth her branches on every side. As early as the middle of the second century, Lucius, a British king, both embraced Christianity himself, and strove to set it forward amongst his people. With this view, he despatched two of his trusty servants to Rome, Rome being then the chiefest of christian cities, that they might confer with its bishop, and receive more full instruction in the things of God. These the Roman prelate consecrated bishops, and sent back to their king, with a present of a copy of the Old and New Testament. But did the Roman patriarch arrogate to himself an ascendancy over our native church,—as belonging to him of

right, or as springing out of this transaction? So far from it, that he thus expressed himself, in a letter to Lucius—“ You have received in the kingdom of Britain, by God’s mercy, both the law and faith of Christ. You have both the Old and New Testament. Out of the same, through God’s grace, by the advice of your realm take a law, and by the same, through God’s sufferance, rule you your kingdom of Britain, for in that kingdom you are God’s vicar.” How clear and interesting this testimony to the independency of our pristine church, and to the supremacy of a christian monarch over ecclesiastical, as well as secular, persons!

So great and successful was the zeal with which this *first royal* disciple of the Saviour prosecuted the work of the Lord, that he extended the framework of the church throughout his dominions, superseding the offices of the three pagan arch-flamings, by the same number of arch-bishopricks, and those of the twenty-eight

flamings, by twenty-eight bishopricks. Thus it appears, not only that the British church is as ancient as the Roman, but that the former became a national church, having the king of the nation as her nursing father, more than a century before such honour was put upon the latter. The brevity which we must study obliges us to pass over many other particulars of an interesting kind, evidential of the early existence and prosperity of our church. But we must not omit to mention that at the council of Arles, held in the opening of the fourth century, three at least of the British bishops represented their church in that august assembly. Nor ought we to overlook the notable fact, that the decrees enacted by this council were transmitted to the bishop of Rome not to be *ratified*, but, simply, to be *promulgated* by him. No recognition of the sovereignty of his see was involved in this act. One particular more in the primitive history of our

church is too touching and important to be passed by unnoticed. She had the honour, in some of the earliest persecutions which ravaged the flock of Christ, to furnish a goodly band to the noble army of martyrs. The first of these worthies was St. Alban, whose memory is still perpetuated by the town which bears his name, and after him four at least of the British bishops fell gloriously in the cause of their Lord.

With such vicissitudes as every division of the church militant here on earth has commonly undergone, the British church maintained her position in our land, until the Roman empire having, in consequence of its own decay withdrawn its dominion from Britain, the defenceless natives, torn by intestine divisions, and harassed by the incursions of the Picts and Scots, in an evil hour, called over the Saxons to succour them in their distress. These treacherous auxiliaries, perceiving the weakness of their friends and coveting their fair possessions, defeated, with little diffi-

culty, those whom they had come to defend. In consequence, the greater part of the country fell under their power; and, as a natural effect, the conquerors being pagan, the ecclesiastical as well as the civil state of things was subverted. Still, our primitive church, though persecuted, was not forsaken, though cast down, was not destroyed. She found a refuge in Wales, in Cornwall, in Northumberland, in Scotland ; where, though despoiled and imperilled, she still maintained her existence. It was in this state of affairs that, at the close of the sixth century, Gregory, the then Roman pontiff, sent over Augustin, accompanied by a band of missionaries, to propagate the gospel amongst the savage Saxons. What then! Does it follow that this man first introduced Christianity into our land?— Or that he formed a church were none survived? So far from it, that it was not long before he and his companions came into contact with our ancient church,

and found her bishops and clergy so staunch in principle and independent in spirit, that when they discovered that the strangers challenged submission to the Roman pontiff, and sought to enforce unwonted observances, they withheld them to the face; repudiated their authority, and would have no fellowship with them, no, not so much as to eat. Against the usurpations of the Roman bishop they meekly but unflinchingly protested; alleging that they owed allegiance to none save to God, and, under him, in matters of discipline, to their own metropolitan. Thus, more than twelve hundred years ago, and at least nine hundred years before the distinctive name of Protestant was given to those who withstand the assumptions and superstitions of Rome, the church of our fathers, primitive in origin, became Protestant in character. So much for the reiterated charge, that Protestantism is an upstart novelty! Nor is this all. The mistake which re-

presents Augustin and his companions as having first brought the gospel to our shores is scarcely greater than the far more common and plausible mistake which assumes that they, only or at least mainly, recovered the country to Christianity. Instead of such being the fact, the entire country, with the exception of two counties north of the Thames and a considerable portion of the southern counties, was evangelized by the native clergy; so that, in all likelihood, not less than two-thirds of the Saxon settlers were brought under the mild yoke of Christ through the zeal and toil of our primitive church. It follows, therefore, that as Rome did not plant, so neither did she, chiefly graft again Christianity in Britain. True it is, that she conduced to this end; but her aid was only auxiliary; and it was marred on her part, and repudiated on the part of our forefathers, because designed to reduce them, surreptitiously, under the yoke of papal bondage.

Not only did the British church withstand the assumptions of Rome at the outset, but she long maintained her protest and struggle against them. Though gradually enfeebled by force, entangled by fraud, she did not fully bend her neck to the foreign chain until the period of the Norman conquest, or even till a later date. There are not wanting a variety of interesting documents to prove, that she continued for centuries to be exempt from some of the grossest doctrinal errors of the papacy, as well as to reluctate against its growing ecclesiastical usurpations. This is not the time or place to adduce the varied testimony on these points which presents itself to the careful student of our early church history. There is, however, one tradition, derived by Camden from the records of Winchester, in relation to the University of Oxford, which is at once so interesting in itself and so pertinent to our purpose that we cannot forego the introduction of some extracts.

King Alfred, in his zeal for learning, induced many erudite Romanists to come over and establish themselves at Oxford; which university had, in consequence of the ravages committed by the Danes, fallen into a sad state of disorder and desolation. Amongt the foreigners, so introduced, the chiefest was St. Grymbold. As a consequence of their introduction, the following memorable circumstances took place.

“ Soon after this, (that is after the establishment of St. Grymbold at Oxford, the restoration of the university, and the revival of its studies,) there arose a sharp and grievous dissension between Grymbold and those learned men whom he brought hither with him, and the old scholars whom he found here at his coming; for these absolutely refused to comply with the statutes, institutions, and forms of reading prescribed by Grymbold. The difference proceeded to no great height for the space of three years, yet there was

always a private grudge and enmity between them, which soon after broke out with the greatest violence imaginable. To appease these tumults, the most invincible King Alfred, being informed of the faction by a message and complaint from Grymbold, came to Oxford with design to accommodate matters, and submitted to a great deal of pains and patience to hear the cause and complaint of both parties. The controversie depended upon this: the old scholars maintained that before the coming of Grymbold to Oxford, learning did here flourish, though the students were then less in number than they had formerly been, by reason that very many of them had been expelled by the cruel tyranny of Pagans. They further declared and proved, and this by the undoubted testimony of their ancient annals, that good orders and constitutions for the government of that place had been made before by men of great piety and learning, such as Gildas, Melkin,

Nirismus, Kentigirn, and others, who had there prosecuted their studies even to old age, and managed all things happily with peace and quiet. And that St. German coming to Oxford, and residing there half a year, what time he went through all England to preach down the Pelagian heresy, did exceedingly approve of their rules and orders. The king, with incredible humility, and great attention, heard out both parties, earnestly exhorting them, with pious and healing entreaties, to preserve love and amity with one another. Upon this he left them, in hopes that both parties would follow his advice and obey his instructions. But Grymbold representing these proceedings, retired immediately to the monastery at Winchester."

Thus, then, it appears, on testimony which cannot be shaken, that Rome had nothing to do with the foundation of our universities. They are clearly identified with the primitive apostolic church of Britain, and must have been in exist-

ence centuries before the papal church invaded our land. By the same evidence it is proved that, up to the eighth century, two hundred years after Augustin visited our shores; there still burned so much of Protestant spirit in the hearts of the professors of learning in one of our universities that they would not bow their neck to the ordinances and statutes which Romish despotism strove to impose upon them. Nor was this spirit confined to the seats of learning. Did time allow, we could adduce evidence enough to satisfy you that resistance to papal usurpation was maintained till the time of the Norman conquest. Yea, and subsequently to that event, both William the Conqueror, and William Rufus, in several instances, withstood the claims of the Roman Pontiff, alleging that they owed allegiance to none except, as one of them impiously expressed it, “to his sword, which had won his dominions for him.” At length, however, the indomitable Becket, by his

ambitious machinations, wonderfully aggrandized the power of the Romish church; and, ultimately, the pusillanimous John prostrated our land beneath the iron hoof of the papacy. Then, for a season, our church became the vassal of that dark despotism which had enslaved the largest portion of Christendom. But even in this eclipse of her liberties, no church enthralled by Rome wore the yoke more uneasily, none more chafed and struggled against her fetters, than the Church of England. It was not more than two hundred years after her enslavement that *he* arose who has been beautifully styled—the morning star of the Reformation,—our own Wicklyffe, of imperishable memory. He stood forth nobly, and denounced the abominable superstitions of Romanism. He laid the axe to the root of the upas-tree by translating the holy Scriptures into the vulgar tongue, thus giving to Britain possession of that ark before which every false god falls to the dust. Nor were the fruits of

his labours lost. His followers, who were branded with the name of Lollards on account of their delight in singing the praises of God, multiplied and spread till they became a formidable body: so that it is scarcely fair to designate Luther the first great reformer, since, in truth, that honour belongs rather to Wicklyffe; and our own land may be regarded as the birthplace of the Reformation. It is true, that for more than a century afterwards, the progress of truth was latent and impeded. Yet was it not wholly arrested even by the martyrdom of Lord Cobham and others who suffered for the faith. Thus it came to pass that when the morning of the Reformation broke forth upon the Continent, it found that the day-break had long before commenced in England. To a wide extent, the minds of our countrymen were waiting for deliverance, and eager to welcome the truth.

Such, my brethren, is a faint sketch of the primitive history of our church. It

was neither planted, nor grafted again, by Rome; it owes no fealty to Rome; and has as clear a right to be an independent branch of the church of Christ as the church of Rome herself can have.

Let us, then, in the next place turn our attention to the Reformation of our church, and ascertain whether it merits to be branded, as some amongst us have unnaturally and ungratefully branded it, as being "that deplorable schism," "a limb badly set," "a miserable division;" so that it has left our church "in bondage," and ourselves under a "body of death." Let us see whether it is fit that such language should be used touching what we have been taught to regard as a glorious event, the most glorious since the first triumphs of the gospel in the world.

The Anglican Reformation was distinguished, through the good hand of our God upon us, by this peculiarity, that it was accomplished from within, not from without;—accomplished by our own

hierarchy, clergy, and lay people, not by foreign reformers, introducing the truth amongst us;—accomplished by the great body of our spiritual rulers, and not, as was generally the case abroad, by a few subordinate presbyters. It is not denied indeed, that it pleased God to use as the rough hammer to shiver the more massive manacles from our church,—that tyrannical monarch Henry VIII. But there is evidence enough to show that he did the work of God, neither heartily nor intentionally, insomuch that his death was one of the happiest events which befel our church, whilst in the crisis of her new birth, almost strangled by his tyranny and caprice. It is, therefore, a false assumption that our Reformation was the work of Henry. It was the work of our Cranmers, our Ridleys, our Latimers, our Hoopers, and our Bradfords. These were the men who, through the might and wisdom of Almighty God, wrought out the stupendous

revolution ; succoured indeed, and seconded, we thankfully acknowledge, by the noble band of Reformers on the Continent.

Throughout the entire progress of the work, however the civil power sustained and gave effect to the ecclesiastical,—the reformation of the church, her restoration from error to truth, her resuscitation from the superstition in which she had been entombed, all that was essentially spiritual in the mighty change was effected by spiritual men. Amongst those whom God employed for the purpose there is one who claims to be specially named,—that great and good though not unblemished man Archbishop Cranmer. His was the master-mind and master-hand in the amazing work. With skill and discretion, as rare as they are admirable, he steered the vessel between opposing currents ; neither, on the one hand, rushing from Romish formalism upon indecent disparagement and abandonment of all form

and ceremony ; nor, on the other hand, yielding to the dictates of a hollow expediency so as to spare any of the grosser defilements of Rome. To this happy avoidance of extremes on either side we are indebted for the union of dignity with simplicity in our worship, and of scriptural truth with systematic arrangement in our confessions of faith.

And here, my christian brethren, let me fasten your attention very earnestly upon a point of peculiar interest,—*the true character of the Anglican Reformation.* The careful aim of the great body of our reformers was not to demolish, but to restore ; not to innovate, but to *renovate*. How steadily and laboriously did they strive to divest our church of the meretricious habiliments with which Rome had deformed her, that she might stand forth again in her primitive and apostolical beauty ! How carefully and discerningly did they search out and authenticate what was really primitive, whether in ritual, in

formulary, or in creed, separating the precious from the vile, the fine gold from the tinsel and dross with which it had been intermingled ! Nothing in their conduct is more clear, than that their study was, not to *form* a new church, but to *re-form* the old. Take as an illustration of the principle which guided them the construction of our matchless form of worship as contained in the Book of Common Prayer. How was it constructed ? Whence were the materials derived ? Chiefly from the ancient liturgies which had been embodied in the missals and breviaries of the degenerated church. They did not cast away those precious fragments of holy antiquity, because they had been mixed up with modern corruptions. They did not fling aside the golden vessels of the early sanctuary, because spiritual Babylon had carried them into captivity, and used them in the worship of gods of wood and stone, and defiled them with her impurities. No, they were too wise in their zeal,

too sound in their veneration for what was indubitably primitive, to be guilty of such desecration. They, rather, sought them out and gathered them together, purified and burnished them anew, and arranged them in lovely order, to adorn our renovated temples. To apply the language of our text, they "stood in the ways and saw and asked for the old paths." They went back to times antecedent to the development of Popery. They referred to "the pattern," which had been given in the beginning; and, the Spirit of God illumining, and the word of God guiding them, they brought our liturgy and our whole church into near conformity with that primitive model. We rejoice in the assurance that we have so much that is truly ancient; the hoary head of our church is a crown of glory, for it is found in the way of righteousness. Hers is not a *medieval*, but an *apostolical* antiquity. Our Reformers stopped not short of those who alone deserve, if indeed any can claim, the name of "*Fathers*;" for as for those of

the Nicene period and the dark ages whom Rome distinguishes by the title, we may fearlessly assert that *they* were the moderns, *we* are the ancients; they were the innovators, *we* are the primitive.

In exact harmony with their general mode of procedure, our Reformers did not break up the continuity of orders in our church; they neither set aside the episcopal office, nor set up men as bishops who had not been duly consecrated to the function. In like manner, they did not appoint any men pastors who had not been duly ordained as presbyters. In no way did they interrupt the succession of the ministry in the Church of England when they cleansed her from the pollutions and rescued her from the thralldom of Rome. What, then, can be clearer than that our church did not become separatical when she became reformed, did not become schismatical when she became catholic! By throwing off the papal yoke, she no more incurred the guilt of schism than

our land, had it been conquered by Italy and held in cruel bondage for centuries, could have been justly charged with rebellion for expelling its conquerors and resuming its freedom. What our church alleged at the Reformation was the simple principle that she owes spiritual allegiance to no head but Christ. And is she not borne out in that allegation? Did Christ ever empower one church to exercise lordship over the rest? Did he give to the mitred prelates of Rome a right to lord it over God's heritage? Where is the foundation of so stupendous an assumption? Is it supplied by St. Peter?—There is much reason for concluding that St. Peter never was bishop of Rome. But could it be proved that he was, this would furnish no ground for the monstrous structure which has been reared in his name. In very deed, there is not the shadow of a shade of real argument which can be pleaded in justification of the arrogated ascendancy of the Roman pontiff. And,

therefore, our church when she shook off the usurper, and raised afresh the honest protest which our forefathers, in the sixth century, had raised, did not become schismatical because she became free. Nay, more, if there be schism, it is on the part of Rome, not on our part. It is *she*, not *we*, who excommunicates all sister churches. The insuperable barrier to union between us is not of our architecture but of hers. Let her return to primitive usages, to the original creeds and the early discipline of the church, and we can again take her hand as that of a sister in Christ. Whatever of primitive truth *she* holds, we also hold; and what *she* holds that we do not is alike novel and unscriptural. Look at the withdrawal of the sacramental cup from the laity, as a specimen of her innovations! This shameless abuse is no older than the council of Constance—that infamous council which committed John Huss to the flames. Nor are several other of her errors much

more hoary ; whilst the creed of Pope Pius, which sums up all her heresies, and binds them upon the consciences of her members, and especially of her priesthood who avouch them by subscription and oath, is, as you are aware, a production scarcely so old as the Reformation. Consequently, all the articles in that creed which have been superadded to the Nicene creed are indisputably novel ; and *these* constitute the partition-wall which defies all attempts at catholic union. It follows, therefore, that in disenthraling herself from the *papal* church, the Church of England did not extricate herself from her *ancient sister* of Rome ; the latter was a chaste spouse of Christ, the former is a meretricious apostate. In a word, when we again became Protestant, then we again became Catholic.

We dare not be proud of our reformed church, but we desire to be thankful for her. We would say with the Israelite of old, “ walk about her, and go round

about her, tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces,"—"she is built as a city which is at unity in herself." Far be it from us, indeed, to use the language of exaggeration respecting her. Like everything with which man has to do, she is not spotless, and in the practical working of her system many and sad are the imperfections which exist. Nor are *they* her truest, as they assuredly are not her wisest sons, who would either deny the existence of such blemishes, or not pray and strive for their abatement. Yet, thus much we venture to affirm of her—there is no church which can more clearly prove her possession of primitive doctrine and discipline; none which can more honestly challenge that her worship, articles, and confessions should be tested by the word of God; there is no church more orderly and decent in her ordinances and ritual, none more fitted for expansion, more adapted for the propagation of divine truth; there is no

church bolder in the avowal of principle, none more tolerant and tender in her spirit, than our own Protestant Church. Such is her gentleness, that, however implacable her antagonism to the errors of Rome, she devoutly prays for the rescue of Romanists from the errors against which she protests. How much, too, is found in *her history* to endear her to our hearts! Not only during the evolution of the Reformation, but since that blessed event, how strikingly has the providence of God been manifested in her behalf, and how bright the honour which he hath put upon her! If in early times she supplied a goodly band to the noble army of martyrs; in latter days she has swelled the company. Her Marian martyrs, who went to heaven in a chariot of flame, deserve to be ranked with the brightest and best of the primitive witnesses who chronicled their faith with their blood. If in the days of her youth the Spirit of God revived his work in the midst of her, after

it had fallen into decay, if he repeatedly preserved her and interposed for her when almost overwhelmed ; so in her latter days he has, oftentimes and signally, both rescued and recruited her. Take as an illustration her chequered history in connexion with the times of the Commonwealth—times which the efforts of Laud and others of the same school to infect her with a subtle leaven of Popery, (even as some are attempting at the present moment,) largely contributed to bring about by forcing on that fearful recoil from formality and despotism which issued in revolution and anarchy. Through the whole of that period, when she was trampled in the dust and prophesied in sackcloth, how graciously did God preserve her in patience and in truth ! And then, how marvellously did he lift her up anew and clothe her with dignity ! So anew in the reign of the second James, when her spiritual liberties were well nigh betrayed and the chains of the Papacy once more

wound around her, — how opportunely, effectually, and bloodlessly, did God work out a mighty deliverance for her and bring in a great deliverer, — the founder of that dynasty which still holds the throne of these realms in virtue of Protestant principle!

No less strikingly has God, at sundry times, quickened afresh the spirit of godliness in the bosom of our church after that for a season it had languished. Thus, in the reign of Charles II., when the enactment and rigid enforcement of that unwise and unseasonable measure, the Act of Uniformity (met, as it was, by a morbid scrupulosity of conscience in many instances, and a sturdy insubmissiveness in others,) swept out of the establishment so large a company of ministers and laymen, a great proportion of whom were distinguished for their zeal and piety it might have been apprehended that little of vitality would remain in her and that the cloud would forsake

her tabernacles. But did it so happen to her? Did not God raise up for her many burning and shining lights; and did he not so enliven and invigorate her that when tested in the reign of James she manifested a noble energy and witnessed a good confession? Her persecuted prelates as they went to the Tower for their faith gave proof that the mantles of their martyred forefathers had fallen upon them. And, in this connexion, we cannot forbear reminding you, not invidiously but in thankfulness to God, of the contrast to the course of our church furnished by the course of nonconformity. What has become of the work of the Baxters, and the Henrys, and the Doddridges? How has it passed away like a cloud without water! The pastors and flocks who succeeded them have, in the lapse of years,滑入 the heresy of Socinus; and their chapels, with scarcely an exception, are now occupied by men who deny the Lord that bought us. Meantime the church

which those good men forsook, and which sustained a heavy loss by their forsaking her, having obtained help of God, continues to the present day neither corrupted in faith, nor unfruitful in holiness. Who can deny that the last half century has witnessed a wondrous reviviscence of religion in our land ? And let it be remembered that this work has mainly sprung out of, or been accomplished by the national church. Wesley, and Whitfield, and others, who, pursuing a devious path, were so eminently instrumental in awaking the people to repentance, these men were sons and ordained ministers of the church, nourished in her bosom and commissioned by her bishops. Nor is it fair to forget how much we owe to the venerable men who, whilst burning with zeal, the same as those whom we have named, abode in dutiful submission to their church—the Venns, the Romaines, the Newtons, the Scotts, the Cecils, and others, too many to mention ; men who may

be looked upon as, in some sort, the reformers of modern days, who aroused the church to her principles and privileges, and taught her children not to rest in form and ceremony, but to seek after the spirit and power of godliness. If the revival which God used these men in effecting spread less rapidly, and appeared less strikingly, than the other to which we have adverted ; yet may it not, without unfairness, be said to have excelled the less regular movement in soberness of character, soundness of faith, practical depth, and permanent solidity ?

Whilst the church has thus been honoured as a nursing-mother of practical godliness, she has been equally distinguished as a witness of the truth and a guardian against heresy. From traitors within, as well as from assailants without, she has many a time protected the treasure committed to her charge. Her liturgy, confessions, and articles have proved the ramparts behind which orthodoxy has

often found a retreat. So it was in the time of Laud and those who acted with him; for when an attempt was made by those divines (prompted, there is little reason to doubt, if not planned, by the Jesuits) to vitiate her again with the notions and usages of former days—or, to employ the language of those who in the present day are bent on the same design, to “unprotestantize” her;—what was the great impediment in the way of their intrigues? What was it that baffled their efforts? Pre-eminently, the fortifications which our Reformers had raised for the defence of the faith. And, at a subsequent period, when a cold formalism in devotion begat a sceptical spirit in many of her more intellectual members, and an effort was made to latitudinarianize the church by lowering the uncompromising tone of her confessions; when combinations were formed and measures adopted to accomplish this purpose,—how effectually did her bulwarks withstand the aggression, and the expul-

sive power of truth within her cast forth the evil! Neither ought we to doubt but that in the present emergency, if only we maintain our battlements and contend for the truth behind their shelter, the treasonable attempt now making within her walls will share the fate of former attempts, and we shall again have reason to magnify God for the marvellous manner in which he has entrenched the truth amongst us, by means of the munitions of our church. Already it is evident that those who would assimilate us to Rome find our Reformed Church too unbending and impracticable for their purposes. Hence it is that, whilst professing unbounded love to her and boasting of themselves as "high churchmen," they yet speak of her in so irreverent, unnatural, and disparaging a style. What are we to think of the honesty of churchmen who brand the Reformation as "that deplorable schism,"* and assert "that Protestantism in its

* Brit. Crit. July, 1841, p. 2.

essence and all its bearing, is characteristically the religion of corrupt human nature?"* And can we deem the man a true-hearted son of our church, who thus delineates her whom he presumes to call mother?—"Till we her children are stirred up to this religious course, let the church, our mother, sit still; let her children be content to be *in bondage*; let us work *in chains*; let us submit to our imperfections as a punishment; let us go on teaching with the stammering lips of ambiguous formularies, and inconsistent precedents, and principles but partially developed. We are not better than our fathers; let us bear to be what Hammond was, or Andrews, or Hooker; let us not faint under the **BODY OF DEATH** which they bore about in patience, nor shrink from the *penalty of sins* which they inherited from the age before them."† Is this the language of a friend, or a foe? The voice is the voice of Jacob, though

* Ibid p. 27. † Tract 90, p. 4.

the hands may be the hands of Esau. The author breathes the spirit of Rome, though he wears the uniform of England. We utterly repudiate the charges thus unsparingly brought against our church. We have seen that the Reformation was not a schism, but an enfranchisement,—not a departure from antiquity, but a return to primitive truth. And as for our Prayer Book, we fearlessly challenge for it a comparison with the purest and best of uninspired compositions.

And now, men and brethren, let us bring home to our hearts some of the practical lessons suggested by this discussion. Let us, in the first instance, learn to thank God for that branch of Christ's church to which we belong—the branch which he made so strong for himself in these lands. However she may be misunderstood and misrepresented ; however maligned by antagonist heresies, opposed to each other in everything save in hostility to her ; we may rest assured the more her history is

searched,—the more her doctrines are tested by holy Scripture,—the more her works as well as her words are fairly weighed, the more will her children have cause to rise up and bless her, and to cleave to her good old way, unseduced by novelty and undisturbed by change. If we cannot find primitive truth, edifying worship, apostolical order, *within her pale*, whither shall we betake ourselves to find them? Thankful for her we ought to be; proud of her we dare not be. We must not make her an idol lest we provoke God to destroy her, nor must we cry out, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we,” lest for our arrogance the candlestick should be removed from the midst of us. Yet, for the truth’s sake, for the sake of her Lord, we cannot but love her. We would say of her, not in the spirit of boasting but of filial gratitude,—“Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.”

Let us further learn, to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not to be entangled again in the yoke of bondage.” Wondrous was the deliverance which God vouchsafed to this land, and wondrously has he preserved to us our spiritual liberties. Let us beware lest by disesteeming and trifling with our blessings we provoke him to withdraw them. Fearfully diluted is the Protestant spirit and fatally lowered the Protestant tone of our land. We have no small reason for apprehending that in all this there is something judicial. It may be that what neither the conspiracies of Jesuitism, nor the Armada of Spain, nor the intrigues of James were able to accomplish shall be accomplished through internal treachery, dissension, and apathy ; and that Rome shall be allowed to scourge us for our unthankfulness and unfaithfulness. “We may take it,” said the holy bishop Beveridge, “as a certain axiom, that the church can never fall but from

within." This witness is true; if our church should be overthrown, the parricidal hands of her children will have brought her grey hairs to the dust. May God pour upon us the spirit of repentance, and stir up his faithful people to all prayer and supplication with thanksgiving on behalf of his truth and church in this land !

Finally, brethren, suffer us to urge it upon your minds that you do not put your trust in your church, instead of trusting in God. The purest confession of faith,—the best organized constitution,—the most spiritual formularies of devotion,—the most sublime and simple order of worship,—yea, and the most full and faithful preaching of Christ crucified,—all will avail you nothing without the power and the presence of the Spirit of God; all will be as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal,—mechanism without motion, a body without a soul. Trust not then, in means, put not your confidence in the church; trust in nothing but your Sa-

viour ; adore him for your privileges but never make them a substitute for himself.

Still, however watchful against formalism and exclusiveness, let the language of our hearts and lips in reference to the church of our fathers,—our mother church, the ornament and safeguard of our land,—be the language of the devout Israelite of old in reference to the church and city which he loved :—“ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem ; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.”

SERMON V.

HOW SEPARATISTS ARE TO BE
REGARDED.

MARK ix. 38, 39.—“ And John answered him saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.”

THERE is no Christian man, and especially no Christian minister, who, in these days of discord, can acquit himself faithfully in his high vocation, except he be crucified not only to the *irreligious* but also to the (so-styled) *religious* world.

He must esteem the opinion of the one no less than of the other as dust in the balances when weighed against the approval of his Master. For it has come to pass, that he who sincerely strives to pursue the middle path, which is, ordinarily, the path of truth, must expect to encounter hostility on either hand ;—too high for the low and too low for the high, he must be prepared to sacrifice popularity at the shrine of principle. These remarks bear appropriately on the theme which, in course, bespeaks our attention this evening ;—*the way in which separatists are to be regarded.* On this topic, as we have had occasion to remark in our last discourse, there are those, on the one hand, who entertain the most intolerant opinions, —holding that such as sever themselves from our church fall into fundamental error, are destitute of real sacraments and cut off from the body of the faithful ; whilst, on the other hand, there are multitudes who, recoiling from such unchris-

tian sentiments, rush into the opposite extreme;—mistake latitudinarianism for charity, and in their horror of bigotry would sacrifice consistency. The latter class of persons speak of divisions as necessary and scarcely to be deplored, as tending to good rather than to evil, as an ornament rather than a blot on the brow of professing Christianity. In consequence, so far from bewailing our unhappy divisions, and being humbled for them before God, they are disposed to extenuate and palliate, not to say glory in them.

Now, assuredly, there must be a medium which ought to be maintained between these extremes. That medium we conceive to be traced out by our blessed Lord in the decision which he delivered when appealed to about the spirit of separation which discovered itself in the church even during his visible presence with her. One of the apostles having represented to him, that seeing a man casting out devils in his name, who followed not with them, they had forbidden him;

he, restraining, on the one hand, their intemperate zeal, whilst he did not, on the other, express any sanction of the separation which they reprehended, answered and said unto them, “ Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me.” What meekness of wisdom distinguishes this decision ! Reprimanding the exclusiveness which would hinder that which is good because done irregularly it gives no countenance to irregularity and division. On this scriptural basis we would rest the discourse which we have undertaken, and which we desire to address to you in a spirit of firmness, yet of meekness,—of charity towards those who differ from us, yet of faithfulness towards those who are staunch in their love to the church of their fathers. May the spirit of wisdom, love, and peace, attend, and give effect to the words of my lips !

That union, *visible* union, amongst his people was most earnestly desired by our

Redeemer, no man conversant with holy Scripture will deny. If there was one topic more than all others on which the Saviour dwelt it was that of brotherly unity. In proof of this, need we do more than adduce a few of the striking passages with which his teaching abounded? In his last discourse to his disciples, when it might be expected that he would impart to them the inmost wishes of his heart, it was thus that he spake: "A new commandment I give unto you that ye also love one another." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." From this passage it is clear that love must be manifest; else how can the world recognise the disciples of Christ by their mutual affection? Invisible union cannot serve the purpose. Again he spake to the same effect, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." And once more, "These things I command you, that ye love one another." In

like manner, the same object is seen to have been paramount in the mind of our great High Priest when offering up his sublime intercessory prayer on behalf of all his chosen even to the end of the world. It was thus he pleaded, “ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word ; that they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one : I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.”—Remark, I pray you, beloved brethren, how emphatically the Saviour twice denoted the great end for which he so yearned after the unity of his people.— And what is that end ? It is that the world, the unbelieving, ungodly, discordant world,

may by witnessing the unanimity of his church, be convinced of his divinity, and converted to his faith. How touching the stress which he lays on this point ! But can *invisible* union tell upon the world ? Can it body forth the power and beauty of the Lord ? In order to this, must there not be the appearance as well as the reality of union,—the palpable form as well as the indiscernible spirit ?

Need we remind you how full the writings of the apostles are of sentiments similar to those of their Lord ? Breathe they not the same spirit—dwell they not on the same chord ? “If,” writes the apostle Paul, whose soul was not more fired with zeal than his heart was fraught with tenderness,—“if there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye may be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” It cannot be fairly said that in these words

St. Paul refers exclusively to accordance in essentials. He makes no exception. He conjures all who name the name of Christ to be of *one mind* as well as to have the same love. So, in addressing the Corinthians, he entreats them "all to speak *the same thing* ;"—earnestly desiring that they should not only have unity of sentiment but identity of confession. Thus also, in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians,—whilst he reminds us that "there is one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in us all,"—he fails not to assert, and that in the very outset, that there is likewise—"one body." With the same view, he desires that the brethren might "with *one mouth*" as well as "with *one mind* glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And again, when deprecating the spirit of separation which had split the church of Corinth into

sections, one saying I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, and another, I of Cephas, (even as in modern times so many bodies bear the names of some human leader,) the apostle emphatically demands of them, “Are ye not carnal?” Thus he traced their divisions, not to eminence of spirituality, but to a carnal mind;—they had lost sight of the unseen head and put some vessel of clay in his place. On another occasion, the same apostle bade the brethren “mark them which caused divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and avoid them.” But need we multiply passages? The point we are illustrating is too obviously scriptural to be directly denied; men may strive to elude the consequences which flow from the principle, but the principle itself they will hardly venture to set aside.

If then, unity, practical, manifest unity, which may be seen by the world; which will tell upon the opinions, disarm the pre-

judices, awaken the convictions, and conciliate the hearts of the men of the world, —if this is what the Saviour had so much at heart, and what his apostles so earnestly inculcated and untiringly laboured after ; it follows, that the unhappy divisions which chequer the Christianity of our land are alike deplorable and disgraceful. We are not now touching upon the question how far God may allow schisms to arise on account of the supineness and unfaithfulness of a church, nor whether he may overrule such divisions to counteract much evil, and, indirectly at least, produce much good ; but we are contending, that, *in themselves and of themselves*, they are bad ;—the badges of our shame not the ornaments of our glory ;—or, to change the figure, the symptoms of the diseased state of the body, and not the signs of its soundness and vigour. For, besides that our separations are in the face of the Scriptures which have been brought forward, and utterly out of harmony with the longings

and intercessions of our common Master,—can any man deny that the endless divisions among Protestants, whilst they harden and embolden the infidel, furnish the Romish Church with her most formidable weapon against those who have cast off her yoke ? True it is that not a few of those schisms may claim Rome as their mother ; —for till the disclosures of the great day it will not be known how largely her unsuspected manœuvres and jesuitical intrigues have served to gender and perpetuate division in Protestant countries, and most of all in our own divided land ;—still the existence of interminable disunion amongst us is the by-word and the proverb with which Rome continually taunts us ; and there is not a man who, treading in the footsteps of our martyred forefathers, maintains his protest against the abominations of mystic Babylon, and urges the children of God to “ come out of her, that they be not partakers of her sins and receive not of her plagues,” but has had to en-

counter the hacknied objection times without number, and has found it the hardest to grapple with, because it is the most palpable and undeniable. No doubt it may be answered that the boasted uniformity of Rome is the uniformity of darkness, not of light; of coercion, not of cohesion; of the iceberg, not of the crystal. But though all this may be asserted, aye, and proved—still, the undisguised and almost numberless schisms which split the Protestant world, at once furnish a handle to the adversary, and place a stumbling-block in the path of the inquirer. “If,” (he is tempted to say,) “I desert the infallibility of my church, to which of the countless sects, each affirming that it has a monopoly of truth, shall I betake myself?” And will he not be further stumbled when he perceives that there is frequently more anxiety for the interests of the party than for the honour of Christ; more zeal to make proselytes

than to make believers? This is a sore evil, and greatly to be deplored.

It is not only in conflict with the Romanist that our divisions are our weakness; they are, as we have already intimated, equally paralysing in our warfare with the sceptic, the scorner, and the reckless. You are witnesses who have most to do with such persons, that their chosen weapon against the truth of God is borrowed from our dissensions. The ready taunt which every flippant scoffer has on his tongue is, "Agree amongst yourselves. When you have agreed what is truth, I may think it worth while to attend to it; but whilst one tells me it is in this creed, and another in that confession, and a third, in no creed at all; whilst those who assure me that it is in the Bible, so little concur as to what the Bible teaches them;—I pray you have me excused from giving time, or thought, or heed to your dogmas." Are we speaking

too strongly when we say that of all the hindrances in the way of the infidel this practical impediment is the most formidable? Woe then, to those by whom the offence cometh! However we must share amongst us the blame of the offence, there stands the stone of stumbling; and, so far from glorying in or making light of our divisions, we ought rather bitterly to bewail them. Must we not with shame acknowledge that, instead of leading the world by the spectacle of our unity to believe that Christ was sent by the Father, we lead them by our perpetual collisions to blaspheme the holy name we bear? Oh that it were with us as in the days of old,—when “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul;” when “they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers;” when the admiring world exclaimed, “See how these Christians love one another!”

Within, as well as without, the church,

great is the mischief done by schismatical separations. How sorely, oftentimes, is the spirit of those whom we must believe to be brethren chafed, embittered, and contracted by our unhappy divisions ! How much of hypocrisy and hollow pretension is nurtured by our unhappy divisions ! Mercenary men set up their religious profession for sale, and the body that will bid highest by countenancing them in temporal things bids fairest to gain their heartless adherence ! How frequently does solicitude to enlarge the sect swallow up solicitude to save the sinner, and a subtle selfishness wear the semblance of disinterested zeal ! To what an extent are the minds of ministers as well as of laymen distracted from matters of infinite moment to comparative trifles through our unhappy divisions ;—thrown into tumult about names and ceremonies, the colour of a vestment, the form of a building, or the finish of a table ! What an amount of the time, and thought, and

energy, and writings, and labours of the christian community, is alienated from its proper object; withdrawn from the evangelization of the world, and wasted on circumstantial which we magnify into essentials,—whilst, in the meantime, the soul and eternity are trembling in the balances!

In their ultimate consequences, how specially disastrous do schisms commonly prove! The germ is division; the fruit heresy. The history of our country furnishes a mournful illustration. Of the nearly three hundred chapels which belonged to the old nonconformists—where Owen lectured, Henry expounded, Baxter preached, and Doddridge prayed,—there are now not so many as fifty in which “the catholic faith” is maintained. In all the rest the Lord who bought us is denied; errors are taught rather than have taught which the pious founders would have shed their blood. What a touching lesson! What an impressive warning! We are not now

discussing the causes or the merits of the original separation, (to these we shall soon have occasion to refer,) we are simply calling attention to the fact, that, whilst the secession from the national church of so large a body of her holiest and best members inflicted a sore wound upon her, the catastrophe of the secession itself has been fatal indeed. When once the bark begins to drift, who can say where she will cast anchor !

If then, separations amongst Christians are fraught with so much evil, and if unity and uniformity are to be so earnestly desired, let us calmly and fairly inquire why and whence so many divisions in our privileged land ? A wider range we need not, and time will not allow us to take.

Unhappily, at an early period after the Reformation, dissensions arose in the Reformed Church. Some were for carrying change too far, and others not far enough ; some for proceeding slowly and warily ; others boldly and precipitately. These

differences were widened after the reign and persecutions of Mary ; for many of the good men who had taken refuge in the churches on the continent became biassed in favour of the peculiarities of those churches, and on their return to their native land that bias largely influenced their conduct. Matters grew worse and worse. On the one hand there was much of morbid scrupulosity and unyielding self-will ; on the other of impatient inconsideration and overbearing intolerance. Reviewing those times from the calm distance, we are astonished at the trifles (for the most part) which were so intensely withheld by one party, and so rigidly enforced by another. The kindling fires of discord were at last fanned into a flame by the proceedings of Laud and his abettors, who to save the church from Puritanism almost forced her into Popery. The catastrophe you know. The church was disorganised, and the throne overturned.

Happy would it have been if the school of adversity had taught all parties moderation. Such, however, was not the result. After the Restoration, the ruling parties in the church, smarting under the sense of recent hardship and oppression, passed the unseasonable and unsparing Act of Uniformity; and carried out its enactments with a rigour and severity which, however we may palliate, we cannot justify. These measures were met on the other side with unbending tenacity, and, in the upshot, a most calamitous disruption took place. As a consequence, many of the nonconformists set up rival communions, and thus, separation became permanently engrafted on our land. That they had much to bear, much to provoke them, cannot be denied; yet, when the blessedness of union and the mischiefs of division are remembered, it may surely be doubted whether they were warranted by the grievances, real or imaginary, under which they writhed, in first deserting and

then opposing the national church; holding and witnessing as she still did—themselves being judges—“the word of the truth of the Gospel.” Certain it is that many of the best of the recusant ministers acted (as we must think) the nobler part, and, relinquishing their benefices, remained in fellowship with the church. Their conduct was highly approved by several distinguished divines on the continent; who first counselled the non-conformists against separation, and then deplored the rupture which ensued. Dissent, once planted was rapidly propagated. Schism begets schism, and resembles the centipede, of which it is said that if cut into a hundred pieces each piece will become a living creature. We would shun uncharitableness of judgment, yet we cannot avoid the conviction, that very many sects have sprung out of impatience of authority, or self-sufficiency and self-opiniatedness, or thirst for personal importance, or lust of notoriety, or

mortified ambition, or love of novelty, or blind enthusiasm, or diseased tenderness of conscience coupled with a narrow understanding. Who shall say how largely these causes have wrought in generating those multiplying sects which have been frequent as bubbles on the surface of the stream, and like bubbles have many of them sparkled for a little while and then vanished away. Much too of existing separation has arisen out of movements, which, though irregular, were not, nor were intended to be, separatical. Such was the mighty movement originated by the Wesleys; devious indeed, but, as we have their own repeated assurances to warrant us in saying, not designed to issue in a distinct pale, and in separate ordinances.

We are aware, christian brethren, that these remarks will seem to some harsh and severe. But we speak in the faithfulness of love. Nor will we spare the faults on our own side. It cannot be denied that

an immense amount of dissent has been occasioned, directly or indirectly, by the church herself; not by her scheme and system, but by her practical working. What a want has there often been of consideration, forbearance, and conciliation! What scandal from the prostitution of ecclesiastical patronage by the state! What offence from laxity of discipline; from profligacy in some of the clergy; from supineness in more! What a prevalency, many times, of defective, not to say unsound, preaching—so that the people have found the pulpit out of harmony with the desk, and the teaching of their pastors with the articles of their church! Who shall say to how much separation this one cause has given rise? Then, besides, and above all this, what shall we say of the utter and deepening inadequacy, for a century past, of the accommodation and ministrations of the church, for the ever multiplying population of the land! An evil, gigantic in its dimensions; till

within the last few years, always increasing ; and occasioned and perpetuated, for the most part, by the wicked and irrational hindrances and which were thrown in the way of church extension. Sects of all kinds had unrestricted license to expand themselves, but the establishment was chained and crippled. No marvel that under such circumstances separation should spread. There was, to a wide extent, no alternative for the people but either to seek means of grace apart from the church, or to lack them altogether. God forgive the past, and look favourably upon the gigantic efforts to meet the exigency !

But enough of this painful and humiliating theme ; enlarged upon, not for the purpose of criminating our forefathers, but of affecting ourselves with shame and contrition--that so we may bring forth fruits meet for repentance. What is to be done ? Are we to abandon the hope of union in despair ? Or are we to say, " These divisions are allowed by God, and he over-

rules them for good, therefore we may be at ease about them?" It is not so revealed, and revelation is our guide. "The wrath of man shall (indeed) praise him;" yet will he punish the man whose wrath he makes to glorify his name. Let us rather all strive together to "hold the faith in unity of the spirit and in the bond of peace." Let the church do what lieth in her to win back her stray children, by persuasion, conciliation, and love; and let those who have forsaken her yet are partakers of "the common salvation," weigh well her claims upon their allegiance. Is she not the primitive branch of Christ's church in this country? Is she not apostolical in order? Has she apostatised from the faith? Does she not hold forth the word of life? Has she not the due administration of the holy sacraments? Is not God in the midst of her, making her the joyful mother of many children,—the faithful nurse of many heirs of heaven? Are then British Christians

justified either in deserting her breast, or in abiding in a state of separation from her? This is a grave question. Nor can it be met by simply replying, "We are safe—you allow that we hold essential truth; why then should we conform?" We answer,—for the honour of the Redeemer, for the prosperity of his cause, for the sake of the world. Would not the visible union of the faithful subserve all these? Do not our unhappy divisions damage them? And is a disciple of Christ to regard nothing else but his individual salvation, or his personal predilections? Are not relative and social claims to have their weight in his decisions?

All these considerations borrow a special force from the aspect of present and the shadows of coming events. It is clear that our common faith and spiritual liberties are imperilled; that a tremendous confederation is forming against them. Whence our danger? Our disunion is our weakness. The watch-

word of the foe is, “divide and conquer”—ought not ours to be, “unite and be unconquerable?” Happy for us should our dangers constrain us into union. So have we seen a flock of sheep, in the calm and sunshine, scattered to and fro in the pastures of the plain; but when a sudden tempest lowered, and fitful blasts gave warning, they thronged instinctively to each other’s sides and round some common shelter. Thus may the gathering storm drive us closer to “the Rock of Ages,” and, as a necessary consequence, closer to each other!

To *abide* in a state of separation ought, ordinarily, to be regarded with more tenderness than to go into a state of separation. In the former case, persons educated as dissenters must have strong prejudices and difficulties to break through in returning to conformity, and they may never have had their minds awakened to the inquiry, why are we not members of the national church; and are we justified in

our estrangement from her? In the latter case, the breach made upon unity is more direct, and less excusable. Surely, at the present juncture, when union is so imperatively called for, and when so much life and blessing distinguish the church, it behoves a man to ponder well before he quits her fold; lest haply he should be following his own spirit not the Spirit of God, and risking the guilt of schism—a sin committed in apostolical times, and which may certainly still be committed.

In urging such thoughts as these, we are commonly met with the plausible argument, “If you object to separation from *your* church, how do you justify your separation from the Church of Rome?” To this we answer, *we never separated from her*. We cast off the yoke of papal bondage; we disclaimed the usurped supremacy of a foreign church, a church which had no claim to be called our mother; but this was not a separatical act. We have shown you in a former discourse

that our free-born church by returning to primitive order and doctrine became not a new but a renovated church,—severed herself not from the church catholic but from Popery. From Rome as she was,—a chaste sister, beloved in the faith; the Rome to whom the Epistle of St. Paul was written, we have not withdrawn. With papal Rome, disfigured by monstrous innovations, arrogating universal ascendancy, setting up a poor mortal in the seat of Christ, and demanding submission to *him* as essential to communion with *her*, we can have no fellowship. The barrier to union is hers, not ours. *She* is a *schismatical*, *we* are a *catholic* branch of the church. Let her stand simply on the ancient confessions of faith, based on the Bible; and let her repudiate the mass of error developed in the dark ages, accumulated at Trent, concentrated in the creed of Pope Pius and rivetted round her neck; let her cast from her all the figments thus superadded to the truth, and

there is nothing to hinder our union as sisters in the family of faith.

But, granting that we *did* separate from the Church of Rome, it would not follow that we became schismatical. There may be cases in which it is not only lawful but a duty to forsake the church of the land—the ancient church. Truth, essential truth, must be maintained even at the expense of unity. “The wisdom which is from above is *first pure*, then peaceable.” And in what case can separation be more clearly required than in the case of a church become idolatrous? But we charge idolatry on Rome. Our martyrs bled on the strength of this charge. Her worship of the host and her adoration of saints and images, had she no other heretical note, would brand her as apostate; and, whilst she continues in apostacy, the language of God to the faithful amongst her children is, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

What fair parallel then can be drawn between separation from the Church of Rome and separation from the Church of England? Where is the orthodox Protestant who will dare to denounce our church as apostate, or deny that she holds all essential truth? To desert her is, therefore, not only to desert the mother church of our land, but to desert her whilst she has neither forsaken the truth nor is forsaken by the Lord.

But it is high time that we should enter our protest against bigotry and intolerance no less than against latitudinarianism and division. God forbid that we should, with the Tractarian school, adjudge dissenters, *as such*, to be out of the christian pale; to lack the ordinances of grace; to be given over to "uncovenanted mercies!" Far from us be such language as the following,—"We have no right to admit that any persons out of the church are or can be in the way of salvation."*

* Palmer's Treatise, vol. i. p. 254.

Much as we prize uniformity, how much more ought we to prize living union with Christ ! The former without the latter is the shell without the kernel—the body without the soul. Show us the image of our Saviour, in lowliness, in meekness, in patience, in love, in spirituality of mind, in holiness of character, in all the fruits of the Spirit—and if we love the original we cannot but love the likeness. We shall love it when set in alloyed metal, though we may love it better when set in the fine gold of the sanctuary. We are bound to love the pious dissenter *as a brother*, we are not bound to love him *as a dissenter*. His dissent we deplore; his holiness we love. It is individual character, not corporate relationship, which decides the state in the sight of God, which will determine the destiny in eternity. “Grace (then) be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.” This is the true spirit of catholicity. Many are members of the invisible who are hardly

allowed to be members of the visible church. Many lighter mistakes may consist with heavenly wisdom—many fainter imperfections with genuine godliness. “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his :” and we too, may know them; for “let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Where, therefore, we see the fruits of the spirit we see the seal of adoption ;—and shall we repudiate him whom God accepts ? Alas, for those who love a *bad* man because he is a churchman, whilst they dislike a *good* man because he is a dissenter,—is theirs the love of “ the brethren ?”

As we would disclaim the bigotry which unchristianises the pious separatist, so would we repudiate the selfishness which looks with a grudging and unfriendly eye on usefulness accomplished by what we may deem irregular instrumentality. What said the Saviour to his officious followers

when they told him that they had forbidden the worker of miracles who followed not with them ? "Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me." If then, our Master allowed the separatist in his day, to cast out devils ; if he still allows some "who follow not with us" to cast out devils by the power of his word and Spirit from the unconverted—to bring the ungodly at home and the heathen abroad into the fellowship of the faith ; who are we that we should forbid them ? Rather, let us say with Moses, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them." Let us breathe the Spirit of St. Paul, who, when some preached Christ even of envy and strife, exclaimed, "What then, notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached ; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Not that we are to countenance dissent

or to take part with dissenters in their schemes, to do so is uncalled for and inconsistent—uncalled for, because we have ample scope for our efforts in conformity with our own church—inconsistent, because, according to our convictions, we shall not be doing good in the best and most legitimate manner. It is one thing to support, another to disallow.

It is apparent then, brethren, how those who separate themselves are to be regarded. If heretics, denying the truth, separate from Christ, we cannot, indeed, acknowledge them as Christians; yet are we to pity rather than to reprobate them; to love them as fellow-creatures, instead of hating them as enemies. If simply separatists, practising as well as professing the faith of Christ, we ought not to suffer the error which (as we must think) shades their christian profession to hinder us from feeling and behaving towards them with forbearance, brotherly-kindness, and charity. At the same time, we are never

to make light of the evils of schism and division ; nor, in our love for the pious dissenter, to countenance, much less promote, dissent.

Cherish then, I pray you, an enlightened, charitable, consistent devotedness to your church. Deem her not faultless, for she is a portion of the church militant not triumphant ; yet deem not that her blemishes authorise you to desert her, and so to incur the guilt of those “ who cause divisions.” Dream not of an unmixed communion here ; let not that witching phantom beguile you. Where on earth is the field which has no tares mingled with the wheat ?—where the threshing-floor which has no chaff blended with the grain ? Believe me, you may search far and near, but you will not find a better nurse,—a sounder teacher, than England’s church. I have lived and laboured in her pale for many years ; I have been neither a prejudiced nor unobservant witness of what has concerned her ; and I have never

known either an individual or a party who forsook the establishment that in the lapse of years proved to have been a gainer by the change in sober spirituality, practical godliness, or peace of mind. The blossom might be imposing but the fruit was shrivelled.

Be not shaken in your minds by exaggerated representations of the prevalency of Tractarian errors in the church. *She* is not changed ; her articles, her confessions, her formularies are unaltered. By these we judge her. By these we will abide. And abiding by *these* we abide by *her*. The controversies which press upon us, instead of scaring us from her ramparts, ought to constrain us to cling to them the more tenaciously as we the more discern the value of their defence ; and, assuredly, if the battle of the Reformation is to be fought successfully we must fight it as with " the sword of the Spirit" so on the battlements of the Church of England.

See to it, meanwhile, that "brotherly love continue,"—even towards those whom we must regard as erring brethren. Let us show them the excellency of our church by the excellency of our spirit. Such churchmanship they *must* understand, they cannot but feel. We shall never by reproach and upbraiding bring back one sheep to our fold. By truth, by holiness, by love, we may. Nearly does it concern us to take care that we do not despise or reject one little one with whom we are to spend an eternity of love.

Let us all strive together for union. A godlike aim. "Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the sons of God." Christians in the present day resemble persons who stand around a common centre but in a circle sadly wide. How then are we to approximate to each other but by narrowing the circle,—by approaching nearer to the centre? Christ Jesus is the centre. O let us press closer to him, then shall we be nearer to each other. This is the soul of all

unity which deserves the name. It is thus we may hope to realize the heart's desire and prayer of our common Saviour.

And, after all, and above all, lay it to heart, I beseech you, brethren, that it is not mere membership of any branch of Christ's church,—the oldest, the purest,—which will avail us before God ; nothing short of incorporation with Christ, of being new creatures in him, will “make us to be numbered with his saints in glory everlasting.” Therefore, let every man look to himself. Let him see that his own heart is right with God. Finally, fellow-Christians, let us all with fresh fervour pray in the pathetic language of our church, “O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace ; give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord : that as there is but one body, and one Spirit, and

one hope of our falling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen and Amen."

SERMON VI.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING.

2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.—“I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; preach the word.”

“My kingdom,” said the Saviour, “is not of this world.” In the mode of its establishment as well as in the character of its constitution it is not of the earth. How just and sublime the sentiment ascribed to Bonaparte,—“Cæsar, Alexander, and I,” said he, “have set up mighty empires by the sword; Jesus Christ alone has set up a mighty empire by love.” Yes, the means employed by God to spread the Gospel of his Son beautifully illustrate the nature

and attest the truth of that blessed revelation. Paganism, the offspring of the evil heart of unbelief, has been propagated by fraud or by force. Mahomedanism, the child of imposture, has gained its conquests by the edge of the scymitar. The religion of Christ has won its way by the gentleness of persuasion, by the power of truth, by "the foolishness of preaching." Thus have its triumphs furnished accumulating evidences of its divinity; the finger of God has been manifest; the instrument has not hidden the hand that gives it effect.

God still honours the instrumentality which he at first ordained. How sad, then, that there should be men who though commissioned to wield the weapon strive to bring it into disesteem. It is consistent in the priests of Rome to do so; but what shall we say of those who minister in our own church and yet speak slightly of preaching. Whilst they unduly magnify the ministerial office, they

disparage one of its most vital functions. A few citations from their works will be sufficient to support this charge. We might easily show that in their latter writings especially they always advert in a depreciating tone to the chosen instrument of Christ ;—but we forbear. Nor will we lay much stress on the rash expression of one of the younger but most notorious members of the school, who remarked that he trusted a friend of his, just entering on his pastoral work, would not be “a preacher of the Gospel.” Did it not occur to him that the very words of Christ in commissioning his disciples were “Preach the Gospel to every creature ;”—and that St. Paul expressly says that Christ sent him “to preach the Gospel.” A more grave and deliberate opinion, hazarded by one of the leaders of the party, is,—“The sacraments, not preaching, are the sources of grace.”* “*Sources of grace*” neither preaching nor the sacraments are. God

* Pref. to vol. i. of the Tracts, p. iv.

in Christ is the sole source of grace. His ordinances are the golden pipes to convey the living waters ; but in themselves they have not a drop to impart. He will not allow the channels to be confounded with the fountain. How far the sacraments are exclusively, to the utter disparagement of preaching, the instruments of divine grace will be tried in the course of our appeal to holy Scripture. To the short passage already brought forward, we add a larger extract from another writer of the same class,—“ Not that we would be thought entirely to deprecate preaching as a mode of doing good ; it may be necessary in a weak and languishing state, but it is characteristic of this system as opposed to that of the church ; and we fear the undue exaltation of an instrument which Scripture, to say the least, has never much recommended.”* This is certainly a bold statement and can easily be shown to contravene the voice of Scripture ; and

* Tract lxxxvii. 75.

as of Scripture so of our scriptural church. We proceed, therefore, to prove the stress laid upon preaching by the Word of God. And may the Spirit of truth, accompanying his own ordinance, make it effectual to the enlightenment of our understandings and the conviction of our hearts !

That God has specially instituted and honoured "the foolishness of preaching" for the salvation of sinners is indicated by the honour which he has put upon his word. The scriptures of the Old Testament as well as of the New are explicit upon this point. The "sweet singer of Israel" declares, "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." And again, "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me." How clearly in these passages are the illumination of the mind and the renovation of the soul ascribed to the instrumentality of the divine word. To the same effect is the voice of God by the pro-

phet,—“ Is not my word like as a fire ? saith the Lord ; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces ? ” The dross it consumes, the stony heart it crushes. So, in depicting the renewal of his people, he says, “ I will put my laws in their heart, and write them upon their minds.” When we refer to the New Testament proofs of the same truth meet us on every side. “ The words that I spake unto you,” (said Christ to the Jews,) “ they are spirit, and they are life.” And in his sublime intercessory prayer, he pleaded for his people : “ Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” What vital energy, what purifying efficacy is thus attributed to that word which God has “ magnified above all his name ! ” St. Paul assures the Romans that he was “ not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” So he afterwards reminds them that they “ were the servants of sin, but they had obeyed from the heart the form

of doctrine which was delivered them,—or rather, into which they were delivered,—the mould in which they were cast that they might be enstamped with the image of God. St. James, speaking of the faithful in general, states, “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.” And, not to multiply passages, St. Peter represents the children of God as “born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.”

It is clear, then, that the Word of God is the primary means employed by God in saving his people: it is no less clear that it is pre-eminently the word *preached* he employs. Not that we would—God forbid that we should—in anywise disparage the reading and searching of the Scriptures; a duty to which faithful preaching will always, as in the case of the Bereans, lead the obedient mind: but we hold that the former was not designed to supersede,

nor, ordinarily, to be a substitute for, the latter. The purpose of God to propagate his truth, in all ages, by the living voice seems not obscurely intimated in the chosen name which he has given to the revelation of his will,—“the WORD of God.” This distinguishing title of holy Scripture indicates the perpetual enunciation of divine truth ; that it is not so much by the silent record, as by the voice of “the lively oracles,” speaking through the ambassadors of Christ, that the work of grace is to be accomplished. The preaching of the Gospel was foretold in the prophecies as one of the chief offices of the Redeemer. In the Book of the prophet Isaiah he is represented as thus announcing his commission : “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.” And when Immanuel, “God with us,” the Lord of heaven and earth and all things came into the world, he dignified the simple

function of the preacher by exercising it with unwearied assiduity. "Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Yea, he gave this as the crowning evidence that he was the Messiah that should come,—"the poor have the Gospel preached unto them." In like manner the holy apostles regarded the preaching of the Word as their special vocation. St. Paul fully brings out the subject,—"After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And, when describing the honour put upon him by God, he says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." So, in addressing Timothy, he declares himself to have been "ordained a preacher, and an apostle;" placing his office as an evangelist in the first rank. How solemnly and repeatedly he urged upon the Bishop

of Ephesus that he should "preach the word" we need not do more than remind you. What then is to be thought of the ignorance or hardihood of those who can speak of a work so magnified by Christ and his apostle—as "little commended by Scripture?"

Of a truth, can there be any hesitation in determining what has been, what still is, the grand instrument in extending, as well as establishing, the kingdom of Christ? When the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls finally sent forth his heralds into all lands, what was the commission he gave them? "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." But has every creature yet heard the message of life? If not, can the work of preaching be at an end? And is it not in the discharge of that work the ministers of the church are sustained by the promise which accompanied the original commission,—"And, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world?" If this promise is to

be understood as coeval with the duration of the church on earth, as, assuredly, it ought to be understood, then so long as Christ's presence abides with his church militant she must fulfil her first high errand, and "preach the Gospel to every creature." No less conclusively does the language of St. Paul associate the spread of Christianity with the preaching of the Word. "Whosoever" (he argues) "shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" "So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Could any chain of reasoning be more consecutive and indissoluble? Invocation of the Lord is the fruit of faith; faith is necessary to invocation; hearing to faith; preaching to hearing; mission to preaching;—and thus

the importance of preaching is irrefutably proved.

But is it that there is any intrinsic power in preaching—any force in argument,—any energy in eloquence to change the human heart?—As well think to sway the ocean with a breath, or rein the whirlwind with a word. The weakness of the instrument is designed to manifest the mightiness of the agency which gives it effect. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of us.” “Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.” When we survey the achievements of an instrumentality designated emphatically as “foolishness,” we are constrained to say,—“it pleased God.”—“Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” This is the peculiar honour of the ordinance, that it is “*the ministration of*

the Spirit." Through this channel, specially but not exclusively, it pleaseth God to communicate the Holy Ghost. The testimony of St. Paul on this point is plain. He appeals to the Galatians,—“Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” And again he asks them, “He therefore that ministereth to you the spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” To the same effect is his witness respecting the Thessalonians,—“Our Gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” St. Peter declares generally of the Gospel, that it was “preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” Herein lay the secret of its might. When at Antioch a great multitude turned to the Lord, it was because “the hand of the Lord was with” his word. When Lydia “attended to the things which were spoken by Paul,” it was be-

cause "the Lord opened her heart." When Peter was preaching Jesus to Cornelius and his friends, "the Holy Ghost fell upon all them that heard the word." This instance calls for special note. It is uncommonly striking. How much of contrivance—how much of divine interposition in order to put honour on "the foolishness of preaching." An angel wings his flight to Cæsarea; a mystic vision visits the apostle at Joppa; messengers hasten to the former place, Peter repairs to the latter;—and all is to bring it about that the first-fruits of the Gentiles may be gathered into the church by the ministry of the word. And what shall we more say?—One hundred and forty times, at least, is preaching mentioned in the Scriptures of the New Testament, and always *so* mentioned as to enhance our impression of its importance.

Far indeed is the Bible from countenancing that idolatrous exaltation of the holy sacraments to the disparagement of

preaching which many are guilty of: to say the least, it places the latter on a level with the former. And far be it from us to even seem to set up the divine ordinances in opposition to one another, or to speak of any of them, and especially of the holy sacraments, save with the greatest reverence. We only wish to make the mind of Scripture manifest. Of the Lord Jesus it is written:—“Howbeit, Jesus baptized not, but his disciples.” Yet, Jesus preached in every place, on every occasion. St. Paul also declares, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel;” implying that this was the paramount purpose of his mission. Nor ought it to be unnoticed that, whilst, throughout the New Testament, the preaching of the word is perpetually mentioned, the mention of the two sacraments is much more sparing. The truth is that without the former the latter would be unavailing. Unless we hold the monstrous doctrine that the sacra-

ments operate physically, not morally ; on the ignorant as on the enlightened ; on the unconscious as on the conscious ; on the unbelieving as on the faithful ; we must admit that as knowledge is necessary to faith, and faith to meet participation of the sacraments, so is the word of God, and the ministry of the word, to both. In the case of the Lord's supper this will hardly be denied,—except, indeed, by the blindest Romanist. But baptism, in the case of infants, may be thought to contradict our reasoning. Is it not, however, a service of faith ? And dare any man contend that a child will, because baptized, prove to be, instinctively and intuitively, as he grows up, an enlightened Christian, though he should be neither taught nor trained in the word of God ? Are we to anticipate that a special revelation will be made to his mind ? Or are we to suppose that he will be saved without knowledge, faith, and obedience ? As then, preaching is not without the sacraments, so, assuredly,

are not the sacraments without preaching.
“What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”

We shall be still further impressed with the importance of the pure preaching of the Gospel by an appeal to the history of the church in all ages. If we refer to her primitive, her palmy days, what do we find?—The preaching of the cross the grand characteristic of the epoch. The apostles “went forth and preached everywhere.” They lived to preach. “In season, out of season;” by night, and by day; in the synagogue, and by the way-side; “publicly, and from house to house,” “they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” And the Lord “gave testimony to the word of his grace;” “working with them and confirming the word with signs following.” Manifold and marvellous were the miracles which they wrought, but these were not the weapons of their power; these carried only the outposts of unbelief; the citadel of the heart

fell before the preaching of “ Christ crucified.” “ The weapons of our warfare,” said the chief of the apostles, “ are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds ; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” When was it that three thousand were “ pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and the apostles, ‘ Men and brethren, what shall we do ? ’ and believed, and were baptized, and continued stedfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship ? ”—It was when Peter preached to them on the day of Pentecost. When was it that five thousand were born in a day ?—It was when the apostles “ preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead.” What won the victory over the embattled powers of earth and hell till the cross waved over half the world ?—Preaching, the “ foolishness of preaching.”—What rived the pre-

judices of the Jew, and purified the tastes of the Gentile? What bowed the haughty philosopher in the dust, and quickened the savage into wisdom? What taught the worshipper of Venus self-denial, and the votary of the Druids gentleness?—Preaching, the preaching of the Cross.

So long as the church continued to be a *preaching* she continued to be a *progressive* church. She won her way throughout the earth, adding territory after territory to the empire of the Prince of Peace. But no sooner did she “settle on her lees,” begin to make much of priestly power and earthly grandeur, to multiply and exalt pageants and ceremonies whilst she made light of the preaching of the word, than the right arm of her strength was withered; she grew in secular greatness but sank in vital energy; she became potent for time but impotent for eternity. And once the lamp of life was put under a bushel, how speedily did darkness and corruption overspread the christian world;—the church

was put in the place of her head; the fathers superseded the prophets and apostles, the ordinances of religion the work of the Spirit; the material cross was magnified to the disparagement of him who died upon it, and the sacraments were exaggerated into substitutes for the grace which they symbolised. Then ceased her conquests and her standards were ground-ed; no longer "fair as the morn and terri-ble as an army with banners," she was too much enervated by luxury and engrossed in self-aggrandisement, to be aggressive for her Lord. The voice of the silver trumpets of salvation were seldom heard within her walls, and, when heard, the sound was so uncertain that none girded him-self to the battle. No marvel that Romanism has always been unfriendly to the freedom of the pulpit. She has felt that her system could not coalesce with the unfettered ministration of the truth, at-tended, as it will ever be, with the spirit of free inquiry; she feels this still; for in

Spain, in Portugal, and wherever else she is in the ascendant, preaching is well nigh banished from her services.

And when and how, christian brethren, did the work of God revive in his church ? —With and by the preaching of the cross. In the preaching of Wickliffe the morning star arose. It was mainly by preaching that Luther, and Calvin, and Zuingle, and the noble host of reformers on the continent, raised the fallen church, and shook the papal despotism to its centre. In our own land, much as the press accomplished—much as the translation of the Bible availed, it was the preaching of the Gospel had the pre-eminence. Preachers were sent forth to proclaim the word in every corner of the country ; as in early times, beneath the open sky, the voice of him that published good tidings was heard, and the echoes of “ Paul’s Cross” still linger in our ears.

If, coming back from the past, we look around us at the present, where do we see

that Christianity exerts its fullest influence? Where do we witness its transforming efficacy—making the drunkard sober, the unclean chaste, the proud lowly, the churl liberal, the wrathful gentle, the earthly-minded heavenly-minded, the slave of Satan the freeman of Christ? Is it not where the Gospel of Christ is preached in simplicity, in fulness, and in power? *There* the sacraments are most intelligently used—*there* the worship of the sanctuary is most in the spirit as well as in the form. We grant, yea, we would earnestly maintain, that the public reading of the holy Scriptures and the use of our matchless liturgy,—instinct and breathing with the word of God,—are fitted to keep godliness alive even where the ministry gives an uncertain, not to say erroneous, sound. Still we hold that it is only needful to compare those times and places when and where the desk and pulpit have been in and out of harmony with each other, in order to be convinced how subservient to other means

—how important under all circumstances is faithful preaching.

Faithful it must be if it is to be of any worth or profit. It is not preaching simply, but the preaching of the truth, “the truth as it is in Jesus,” that we are upholding. How much that has borne the name of preaching has been fraught with error and fruitful in mischief! And hence those who would deprecate this instrument speak of it as frail and fallible, claiming no great respect. But shall the unfaithfulness of man make the ordinance of God of none effect? It is not preaching in itself, *but his own truth preached*, to which he gives testimony. Nor will the admixture of slight and undesigned error hinder the efficacy of his appointed instrumentality. In this way it is made manifest that the excellency of the power is of God and not of man. The voice is human, but the word divine. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” The Scriptures are the granary filled with the incorruptible seed;

preaching is the sowing of that seed in the furrow. The truth in the Bible is the sword of the Spirit sheathed in its scabbard ; preaching is the drawing forth, the wielded, and the thrusting home of the heavenly weapon. And ordinarily, we say not invariably, as the seed must be sown in order to the harvest, as the sword must be wielded in order to the battle,—the word must be preached in order to salvation.

Having now brought those opinions which deprecate preaching to the test of Scripture and experience, let us also weigh them in the balances of our church. In the ordination of a presbyter, she has appointed that the bishop should place in his hands a copy of the holy Scriptures, accompanying this expressive action with the address,—“Take thou authority to preach the word.” In the collect for St. Peter’s day, she teaches her children thus to pray :—“O Almighty God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy

apostle, St. Peter, many excellent gifts, and commandest him earnestly to feed thy flock ; Make, we beseech thee, all bishops and pastors diligently to preach thy holy Word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Thus, in the commemoration of him whom so many regard as the prince of the apostles, our church singles out his commission to preach the word, as claiming supreme attention. To the same effect is the collect for St. Bartholomew's day.—" O Almighty and everlasting God, who didst give to thine apostle Bartholomew grace truly to believe and to preach thy word : Grant, we beseech thee unto thy church, to love that word which he believed, and both to preach and receive the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Our church has also carefully marked her estimation of preaching by providing her clergy with two books of Homilies, — books unrivalled

for their depth and breadth of doctrinal truth, their uncompromising boldness, their homely nervousness of style, and the power of their practical application. These venerable discourses, though not so much needed as they originally were as helps in the pulpit, may well claim to be regarded as *models* for the ministrations of the clergy. Happy for the church were they more deeply studied and more closely copied.

If then, men and brethren, the preaching of the cross is so clearly proved to be ordained by God, honoured by the Holy Spirit, and magnified by the church; beware how you slight or disparage it. There are those who say, "Have we not the Bible at home, and may we not peruse it for ourselves? or can we not *read* discourses on Scripture superior to those which we are likely to *hear*?" True, but if it pleases God "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" can you look for his blessing if

you make light of his appointment ? It is not as the work of man but as the ordinance of God that it claims your reverence. There cannot be a grosser desecration of the means of grace than to hear in a carnal spirit. To frequent the sanctuary as you would the lecture-room or the theatre, sitting in the attitude of critics and admirers, indulging curiosity or seeking amusement, is an act of profaneness no less criminal than common. For the sick man, on the verge of death, to be criticising the language or watching the manner of his physician whilst engaged in ascertaining the symptoms and prescribing the remedies for his disease ;—or for the prisoner at the bar of his country, standing to be tried for his life, to occupy himself, during the charge to the jury, in applauding or finding fault with the style or the action of his judge ;—neither of these cases would involve a folly comparable to yours should you in hearing the word have your attention monopo-

lised by the messenger whilst you set at nought the message he delivers—stamped though it be with the authority of God, and big though it be with the destinies of eternity. “Take heed, therefore, how ye hear.” Wait on God not on man. Remember that the word preached cannot profit except it be mixed with faith in them that hear it. And remember that faith is the gift of God, the fruit of his Spirit.

Whilst you guard against depreciating guard also against exaggerating the importance of preaching. Do not allow it to overshadow the kindred ordinances of grace. If it do not quicken you to prayer—do not endear to you the Supper of your Lord—do not make the Scriptures more your study and delight—your hearing is vain,—as from appetite without digestion neither nourishment nor growth can ensue. You must be doers of the word if you would be blessed in your deed. Instead of idolizing one ordi-

nance and disesteeming the rest, you must honour all, and honour them for the Lord's sake.

If the preaching of Christ crucified be of such moment, how deeply does it concern our church that it should be heard in all her tabernacles. It behoves her to be a living witness as well as a pillar and ground of the truth. She must set forth the Gospel by the lips and the lives of her clergy as well as by her articles, creeds, and liturgy. Let Rome be jealous of faithful preaching; well may she dread the exercise of reason, the spirit of inquiry; for with her ignorance is the mother of devotion, and blind credulity best suits those who are called upon to yield themselves into the hands of the priesthood, and to lie passive beneath the foot of the hierarch. But God forbid that our church should ever forget that as she owed her origin to the preaching of the cross, so she owes her renovation, mainly to the same instrumentality. It was

chiefly by means of, to borrow from our Reformers a quaint but significant expression, "the liberty of prophesying" that the Reformation was achieved; and it is chiefly by the same means that the Reformation must be maintained and defended.

Let us further lay it to heart, beloved brethren, how bounden the duty and how high the privilege of preaching the Gospel to every creature. Here however, those who disparage the ministration of the truth at home would discourage its proclamation abroad. Of modern missionary efforts they speak very slightingly, and seem almost to doubt whether we are authorized in making them, or, at least, whether we can look for any success whilst preaching the Gospel is the principal means employed. We need not be careful in this matter; with our Saviour's last charge, accompanied by our Saviour's last promise, ever sounding in our ears, we cannot doubt, we must not falter... We

ourselves are this night living witnesses that the labour of the missionary is not in vain in the Lord. Had the church at Jerusalem acted as some would have our own church act, we should most likely be at this moment gathered together, after the manner of our savage forefathers, beneath some oak tree's shade, to perform dark orgies of licentiousness and blood, instead of being thus assembled together to worship God in holiness, in spirit, and in truth. And is the Gospel become superannuated or decrepid through age? Is the cross of Christ shorn of its energy? Is the power of the Spirit restrained? Let New Zealand answer! Let the South Sea islands tell! Let Tinnevelly and Krishnagur give the reply! No! we are not straitened in God, we are straitened in our own bowels—in our faith, our zeal, our self-denial, our bountifulness. "Now for a recompense in the same, I speak as unto my children, be ye also enlarged." Let us forget minor matters in the stupendous work we have

before us. Shall we be wasting our energies on internal conflicts whilst the fields of the earth are white unto the harvest ;—and whilst few and far between are the reapers that enter into the harvest ? India with her awakening myriads rebukes us. Africa with her touching claims puts us to shame. China with her untold millions chides our unfaithfulness. Then let us spend and be spent in accomplishing Christ's commission. Brethren, the time is short, the occasion urgent, the door open, the prospect rich in promise ; now is the accepted time, now the golden opportunity. Let us then gird ourselves afresh to the work of our Lord ; nor let us aim at anything less than that the world should become the temple and every heart the altar of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

SERMON VII.

ON RESERVE IN THE COMMUNICATION
OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

Acts xx. 26, 27.—“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”

IT is scarcely possible to conceive a more affecting scene or a more touching address than the scene and the address with which these words stand connected. Paul the apostle, once Saul the persecutor, called to be an ambassador of that gospel which he had striven to destroy, having obtained help of God, became the father

in the faith of a multitude who through him believed to the saving of their souls. Amongst these was a goodly company in the city of Ephesus, who seem to have been specially endeared to him, as his Epistle to the Ephesians strikingly shows. And now he had grown grey in the service of the Captain of his salvation ; the time of his departure was at hand : he had fought a good fight ; he had finished his course ; he had kept the faith ; and, in the near prospect of the martyr's death which was to crown his career, his bowels yearned over those whom he had begotten in Christ ; he therefore sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus to meet him at Miletus ; and there, surrounded by those whom he had put in charge with the flock of Christ, he poured forth his soul in an address unrivalled for its pathos and beauty. He recalled to their minds his own teaching,—his faithfulness, his toils, his tears. He conjured them to watch over the flock entrusted to them, and to guard it against

impending perils ; enforcing all by the assurance that they should see his face no more on earth. Under this conviction he made his appeal to their consciences in the sight of God, that he was clear from the blood of all, because he had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God. Such was his solace and joy in looking back on his ministry ! Such must be the solace and joy of every steward of the mysteries of God who shall meet his Master in peace. It will not be the clearness of his apostolical commission ; it will not be the purity and excellency of the church in whose sanctuaries he ministered ; it will not be the gifts and endowments with which God enriched him ; it will not be the acceptance which he may have enjoyed amongst the people of God ; it will not be the gathering crowds which may have hung upon his lips ; it will not even be the plentiful fruit with which God may have crowned his labours ;—it will not be any nor all of these things which, simply

and supremely, will constitute the rejoicing of the messenger of God in the great day of account ; but rather the fidelity and diligence with which he delivered the message committed to him, so as to be able to stand before his Judge clear from the blood of all men.

It were natural to imagine that there could be no need to vindicate the minister of Christ in such unreserved proclamation of the Gospel. It might be supposed that to undertake to do so would be a gratuitous task. Would that it were so ! But, sad to say, within our own uncompromising church there have arisen those who would restrict the overtures of reconciliation and shroud the riches of grace. We are not therefore about to enlarge on an unreal theme in discussing this evening the doctrine of reserve in the communication of the knowledge of Christ. Our endeavour will be, in the first place, to exemplify the unscriptural views advanced by certain writers on this point ; and, in

the next, to show how unsound and insufficient the reasons which they assign in support of those views. Let us look up to Him “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that He would shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Before entering upon evidence to show that the Tractarian school inculcate a modified and reserved communication of the truth as it is in Jesus, and especially in relation to his atonement, a few preliminary remarks are due to them, to ourselves, and to our subject. Let it be fully understood then, that in so far as they insist upon a godly reverence in handling the things of God we entirely go along with them. Nothing is more unbecoming, irrational, or repulsive, than to trifle with what is sacred ; and not only does *he* incur this guilt who dares to point a jest or barb a sneer by allusion to or quotation from the word of God, but *he* cannot pass un-

blamed who in discoursing on holy themes falls into levity of spirit or flippancy of language; or who condescends to illustration fitted to excite a smile where all should be solemnity. Whether we write or speak of the mysteries of our faith the words of God to the prophet of old ought to be present to our minds,—“ Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” Reverence ought to characterize every religious exercise; we can neither hear, nor pray, nor preach, nor search the Scriptures, nor sing the praises of the Lord, aright, but in a solemn, chastened spirit. He who deals lightly with the things of God is on the path to scepticism, and, like him who put forth his unbidden hand to touch the ark, he is in danger of being smitten by a jealous God.

Thus far, therefore, we are at one with the writers in question. We further accord with them in blaming an undue *familiarization* of divine truths. Too

simply those truths cannot be set forth, but they must not be *secularized*. We dare not strip them of their unearthly dress, as some authors and teachers do. To many of the strictures on this point contained in "The Tracts for the Times" we give the meed of praise. Their authors are right in demanding that the truth of God should not be denuded of the heavenly garments with which her Father hath robed her, and clad instead with the coarse texture wrought in the looms of earth. On this ground we disrelish the works of more than one American divine as well as several popular works among ourselves drawn up for youthful readers. They bring down the high things of revelation from their native grandeur, and make them *powerless* in striving to make them *plain*;—as though you were to dress an angel in the habiliments of man. The *language* of Scripture is so suited to the *ideas* of Scripture, that you cannot materially change the former without running the risk of marring

the latter. For this reason we love the preaching which is rich in the phraseology as well as in the sentiments of Holy Writ. Other phraseology cannot fitly express many of the mysteries of our faith ;—mysteries which are to be believed not to be explained ;—mysteries to attempt the explanation of which is as though the Israelite of old should have attempted to draw aside the veil which curtained off the holiest of all. For such attempts we entertain as strong a distaste as the Tractarian divines can feel. But where we are at issue with them, and where we conceive they begin to slide out of the enforcement of befitting reverence into the inculcation of an insidious compromise of the counsel of God, is where they argue in favour of keeping the distinguishing truths of the Gospel in the shade, and of not allowing the atonement of Christ to hold a very prominent place either in *our* preaching or in *your* faith. They would have this cardinal doc-

trine intimated and assumed, rather than manifested and commended to every man's conscience. In *their* system as in that of Rome it is clear that the reservation of the free grace of God through his Son is essential to the maintenance of that moral thraldom on the part of the people, and that sacerdotal power on the part of the clergy, which are too plainly the drift of the whole scheme. Justification through faith in the sole merit of Christ lays and is seen to lay the axe at the root of human desert, of priestly salvation, of gradual and difficult reconciliation with God.—And take these away—and the pillars of hierarchical domination are gone.

But it is time that we should let the writers whose views we are examining speak for themselves. In one of "the Tracts" which bears the title, "On Reserve in communicating Christian Knowledge," it is observed, "The prevailing notion of bringing forward the Atonement explicitly

and prominently on all occasions is evidently quite opposed to what we consider the teaching of Scripture."* It is added,—"In all things it would appear that this doctrine, so far from being what is supposed, is, in fact, the very 'secret of the Lord' which Solomon says is with the righteous, and 'the covenant' not to be lightly spoken of by man, but which '*He* will show to them that fear him.'"† It is also deemed necessary to try and ascertain "the cause of the extraordinary prevalence of this modern opinion of the necessity of preaching the Atonement thus explicitly."‡ And again, it is stated: "Not only is the exclusive and naked exposure of so very sacred a truth, unscriptural and dangerous, but as Bishop Wilson says, the comforts of religion ought to be applied with great caution. And moreover to require, as is sometimes done from both grown persons and children, an explicit

* Tract 80, p. 75. † Ibid. p. 76.

‡ Ibid. p. 76.

declaration of a belief in the Atonement, and the full assurance of its power, appears equally untenable.”*

A second Tract on the same subject contains this significant position :—“ It (that is, the distinction between this mode of teaching and the Scripture method) may be observed in this, that this scheme puts knowledge first, and obedience afterwards : let this doctrine, they say, be received, and good works will necessarily follow. Holy Scripture throughout adopts the opposite course.”† And once more it is said : “ To suppose, therefore, that a doctrine so mysterious and unspeakable as that of the atonement, is to be held out to the impenitent sinner to be embraced in some manner to move the affections, is so unlike the Lord’s conduct, that it makes one fear for the ultimate consequence of such a system.”‡

* Tract, No. 10, p. 78. † Ibid. No. 87, p. 56.

‡ Ibid. p. 65.

We might multiply passages of the same tendency ; but we have adduced enough to show that it is not simply the *exclusive* (as the writer would have it thought) but also the *explicit* proclamation of the Atonement against which he argues. There is indeed a vein of sophistry running throughout the reasoning in the Tracts from which we have quoted. Views are imputed to those who hold that the Atonement ought to be pre-eminently brought forward in the ministry of the Gospel which are altogether foreign to their minds. We know of no class of the clergy who contend that man is to preach nothing but the Atonement. Such preaching would fail of declaring “ all the counsel of God.” What is contended for by the persons so unfairly represented is that the *cardinal truth* of the Gospel is *the atonement* accomplished for sinners by Immanuel, “ God with us ;”—that this is the centre of the whole scheme, *from which* every other truth should be shown to radi-

ate, *into which* converge ; and that no man can be said to preach the Gospel who does not so set forth this doctrine that it is felt to pervade his entire ministration. It is not just, therefore, to say that those ministers who exalt the propitiation in which we must confide, disparage or overlook the example which we are bound to follow. Far from it : they study, according to the exquisite language of our church, to teach their hearers—" most thankfully to receive Christ's inestimable benefit, and also daily to endeavour themselves to follow the steps of his most holy life." Still, they hold, most earnestly hold, that no man can or will follow the footsteps of our Lord who has not received the inestimable gift of his atonement ; that to be reconciled to God through the satisfaction made by his Son, is preliminary to all thorough, hearty obedience, so that whatever is done without Christ is not done acceptably to God,— whatever springs not from a heart at peace with God through Christ springs not

from the one motive which renders any doing of man virtuous in the sight of God; insomuch that without Christ, as he himself declares, we can do nothing. Consequently they maintain, that to reserve the knowledge of Christ, to keep out of view till some advanced stage in the penitent's history, the love of God in Christ, is effectually to hinder his conversion, and to blunt the efficacy of the Gospel; is alike hurtful to the interests of holiness and dishonouring to the grace of God. *This* is what we contend for, and not for the reiteration of a few fundamental doctrines, to the setting aside of all others. At the same time, as a distinguished prelate of our church* has ably argued, of the two mistakes,—that which leads a minister to

* It is hardly necessary to say, that reference is made to the Bishop of Ossory, whose masterly Charge has left little to be added on the subject of reserve, and into whose train of thought and reasoning this sermon has, to a considerable extent, unavoidably fallen.

dwell too exclusively on the example of Christ, and that which leads him to dwell too exclusively on the atonement of Christ,—the latter is much the most perilous; since without the reception of the atonement no man can be restored to God, none can be made holy; whereas, let faith in the sacrifice of Christ—that principle of all godliness—be planted in the heart, and the fruits of righteousness must inevitably follow. Both extremes, however, ought to be shunned; for whilst we are bound to teach that Christ crucified, and he alone, is, through faith, our propitiation before God, we are equally bound to admonish those who believe in Christ, that they should be careful to maintain good works;—that the evidence that we have received Christ unto justification is that we have received Christ unto sanctification; and that though we are justified wholly without our works, yet we shall be judged strictly according to our works. Such, beloved brethren, is a faithful representation of the

doctrine held and taught by the great body of those who are most opposed to Tractarian innovations.

That the Atonement is to be brought forward in the ministry of the word both to sinners and to saints,—broadly, explicitly, and generally brought forward,—to the former for their conviction and conversion, to the latter for their establishment in faith and edification in holiness,—the whole Gospel proves. In very deed, what *is* the Gospel? —Is it not the announcement of the Atonement? Wherein does it differ from the law?—Wherein from every system of natural religion?—Is it not essentially in this, *that it reveals the divine method of reconciling a believing penitent to God through the righteousness of his Son?* Take this feature from the Gospel, and it is the Gospel no more. The sound of the silver trumpet is turned into harshness; the glad tidings of great joy have lost their joyfulness. Can then a man preach *the Gospel* who does not proclaim *the Atonement?*

Can he "declare all the counsel of God," whilst he keeps back or throws a shade around the master figure in the picture which he is appointed to display? If the Lamb of God is not set forth to *the transgressor*, what is to melt his icy heart? If the Lamb of God is not set forth to the *trembling and contrite*, what is to inspire them with hope? What truth beside can minister relief to the burdened, comfort to the mourning, succour to the tempted, the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound?

But let us notice and sift some of the arguments advanced in support of the doctrine of reserve. The one on which most stress is laid is the assumed conduct of our Lord himself, whose course and teaching it is asserted were characterized by a studied reserve, and especially in relation to his own Godhead and Atonement. Now we deny that it can be shown that there was any such studied reserve as is represented, though we admit that the dis-

closures made by Christ were not so full as might have been anticipated, nor as were afterwards vouchsafed unto the church. But for this course of procedure reasons are assigned in the Gospels; reasons which cannot now be pleaded as authorizing his ministers to pursue a similar mode. It was in harmony with the whole economy of revelation that Christ should only partially develope himself and his work to the world ; for it seemed good to Him, “by whom are all things and for whom are all things,” to ordain that *the twilight* of the day of grace, as vouchsafed to patriarchs and prophets, should be long and slowly progressive : consequently it was accordant with this ordinance of divine wisdom that *the sunrise* should be gradual, —shining more and more unto the perfect day. But now that “the darkness is past and the true light shineth,” are we to overcast that light, and throw back the church into the shadows of twilight again ? There are, however, direct reasons furnished in Scrip-

ture for the caution which, in some instances, the Lord Jesus maintained in working his miracles and manifesting his divinity. He foresaw that had he acted otherwise it would have followed that either, on the one hand, the people would have "taken him by force to make him a king," or, on the other, that his enemies would have forestalled his purpose by precipitating his death. More than once is the withdrawal of Christ from public view, and the degree of mystery which he threw around himself, accounted for on these grounds. But it is a mere assumption to say that Christ did not disclose his atonement. It was continually indicated, if not set forth, in his teaching. What else can be said of his perpetual offers of mercy and declarations of forgiveness to the penitent and believing through his own name? Do not all these involve, yea, denote his sacrifice? What, indeed, could be more clear to the Jews than his declaration that, "like as Moses lifted up the serpent in the

wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." To the same effect he added, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." So again he asseverated, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." And what shall be said of his blessed invitation—"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?"—What of his declarations—that he "laid down his life for the world?"—that he "gave his life a ransom for many?"—that he "laid down his life for his friends?"—that "the good shepherd laid down his life for the sheep?" Did he not also, again and again, pronounce forgiveness—full, unreserved, immediate forgiveness—to such as came to him in faith? Did not those who

heard him speak in this manner, on more than one occasion reason within themselves and reason justly,—“who is this that forgiveth sins also?”—“who can forgive sins but God only?” And did not Christ at once demonstrate both his godhead and his atonement, when, in proof that the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins, he said to the sick of the palsy, “Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house; and immediately he that was sick, arose, took up his bed and walked?” Even in the case of her who had been notoriously a sinner, and whom the Pharisee would have spurned from his feet, Christ did not keep back, delay, or modify the communication of his grace; but said unto her, in the face of her enemies, “Thy sins are forgiven.” In the sixth chapter of the gospel by St. John, his whole discourse, though addressed to a mixed multitude, is fraught with the doctrine of his atonement. “Verily, verily, I say unto you,” (said he,) “except ye eat the flesh of

the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." It is clear that in these words the Lord Jesus did not refer, directly at least, to his holy supper, for that was not yet instituted ; and to represent it as essential to eternal life, would imply that the patriarchs were shut out from heaven. His reference is to the believing reception of his atonement, which was accomplished by the shedding of his blood and the offering up of his body ; of which, therefore, whosoever will be saved must be made a partaker. These are a few, and only a few, of the evidences which abound in the gospels to show that Christ did not with-

hold from those whom he taught the knowledge of his sacrifice for sin and of the pardon which rests on the foundation of that sacrifice.

Nor is it correct to say that the Lord kept back the knowledge of his Godhead, or of the mystery of the Trinity. With such explicitness did he declare himself to be the Son of God, even to the blaspheming Jews, that they, who were the best judges of what he meant, on this very ground attempted his life, because that he, "being a man, made himself equal with God." Yea, this was the charge on which he was delivered up and crucified; for the Jews bare witness,—"We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Could there be more conclusive proof that Jesus asserted his divinity, not only in secret to the faithful, but also in public to the unbelieving? On the subject of the Trinity in Unity, we need not do more than refer to the institution of baptism,

wherein the acknowledgment of this doctrine is identified with admission into the church.

It is not denied, however, that our Lord did on some occasions throw a mantle round his miracles and convey his instructions "in dark sayings." But it is an assumption to state that he acted thus in order that he might not enhance the guilt of those who rejected him. For was it not of such he declared, "If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father?" And were not most of his miracles wrought in the presence of multitudes?—As in the restoration to sight of blind Bartimeus,—in the raising of the widow's son at the gate of Nain,—the healing of the man sick with the palsy,—and the feeding of the five thousand with the five barley loaves? Did he refrain from displaying his power in the streets of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum;

although he foresaw the result would be that he should have to witness against them—“Woe unto you for if the mighty works that have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you?” So of his teaching.—Did he not testify against the world, “If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin?” And again, “This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.”

With regard to the parables of our Lord, it is no paradox to say of them, that they were at once the simplest and the most obscure method of instruction;—the simplest and most impressive to those taught of God—the most inexplicable to those who refused to be instructed. They re-

sembled the pillar which followed the armies of Israel in their passage through the Red Sea ; on the one side darkness to the enemies, on the other side brightness to the servants, of God. It is unwarranted, therefore, to represent the parabolical teaching of Christ as a veil cast in mercy around the truth that it might not enhance the guilt of the unbelieving ; it was rather a shroud thrown around the gospel in judgment because of the hardness of their hearts. This is the reason which the Redeemer himself assigned for his frequent use of that mode of instruction.—“Therefore speak I to them in parables : because they seeing see not ; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive ; for this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have

closed ; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Nor was this method of procedure either new or uncommon, it was in accordance with the general principle laid down by Christ,—" Every one that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly ; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

But whatever reasons influenced the Redeemer in adopting the partial reserve which sometimes marked his teaching, it is clear that those reasons no longer exist, and that in this respect his example is not binding on his ministers. For if, after his transfiguration, " he charged his apostles that they should tell no man what things they had seen ;" he also added,—" till the Son of man is risen from the dead." Whence it follows that what was to be kept secret for a season, was after that to be published abroad. So, likewise, he gave his disciples this

general command,—“What I tell you in darkness speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear in closets, that proclaim ye upon the housetops.” Not, however, to multiply passages, what can be more explicit than the closing commands of our Lord? He ordained that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.” And in the very moment of ascension, he said to his ambassadors in all ages, “Go ye into *all the world* and *preach the Gospel to every creature.*” Could language be more comprehensive or express? What corner of the earth is excluded? What individual of the human race excepted? Is it for us then, in the face of such language, to proscribe any places or persons, and to say to them,—“These ought not to have the Gospel proclaimed to them?” Are we wiser than God?—or are we more merciful than Christ? Glorious amplitude—ines-timable privilege of our commission! “*Preach the Gospel to every creature!*”

Not the religion of nature—not the covenant of the law—not the systems of human theology ;—but *the Gospel*, “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” And what is the Gospel?—“The glad tidings of great joy” which, as at this sweet season,* inspired the anthems of the skies, whilst angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.” And these were the tidings they announced: “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.” The Gospel is therefore *the proclamation of a Saviour*,—*the promised Saviour*,—*the anointed Saviour*,—*the divine Saviour*. No man preaches the Gospel then who does not *preach to all “repentance and remission of sins” in the name of him “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for our sins through faith in his blood.”*

How the apostles understood their Master may be easily determined by an appeal

* Preached at Christmas.

to their preaching and their writings. Let their preaching, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, be examined. What is the character of the first address delivered by St. Peter to a multitude, a large proportion of whom had, in all likelihood, joined in the infuriated cry, “Crucify him, crucify him;” and whose hands were reeking with the blood of the Holy One and the just? Can there be imagined an assemblage of men more unfit for the reception of the knowledge of Christ—less likely to embrace the doctrine of the cross, than that assemblage? Surely from them, if from any, ought the doctrine of salvation to have been reserved. But did St. Peter keep back the Gospel? Did he take some circuitous path by which to bring them to conviction? So far from it, that he testified to them of Christ—“Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised

up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. * * * * This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses, therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear * * * * therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Such was the tenor of Peter's discourse. And what was the effect? "They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" What a change! From the language of blasphemy to the language of penitence. And how was their inquiry answered? Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise

is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Had we time to advert to every apostolical discourse which is recorded, we should find illustrations equally to our point. Whether the apostles preached to Jew or Gentile, in the house or in the synagogue ; to bring to repentance or to comfort the penitent ; Christ and him crucified was still their theme. With them there was no backwardness, no circumlocution in pointing the penitent to the Lamb of God. Take one instance, and let it suffice for many. A ruthless jailor, who had probably been steeped in crime and cruelty, who had shown his harshness by thrusting the preachers of the Gospel, lacerated as they were with the scourge, into the innermost prison, and making their feet fast in the stocks —this man, roused by the judgments of God to sudden conviction, "came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas and brought them out and said, "Sirs, what

must I do to be saved?" Now to this man what would have been the answer of those who admonish us to reserve the knowledge of Christ? Is it uncharitable to infer that it would have been to this effect,—" You must fast and abase yourself, and give alms, and pray, and do good works, and make reparation for the wrongs you have inflicted, and thus make yourself ready for grace and pardon,—and in process of time you shall be led further into the knowledge of salvation." But was it in this way the apostles met the question of the shuddering suppliant? No! They knew of no such tortuous and tangled access to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness —to Him who, by the one offering of himself, once offered, for ever perfected them that are sanctified, making a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. At once, without hesitation, and without disguise, they said, " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and

thy house." The result was immediate. That very night the jailor and his household being baptized, "rejoiced, believing in God." "Beauty was given him for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Oh, brethren, how unlike our way of dealing with a sinner is God's way of dealing with him! Well might the Lord say by the prophet Isaiah,—after the full proclamation of grace, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God for he will abundantly pardon;"—well might he add, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." And well may we exclaim with the sweet singer of Israel,—" And is this the manner of man, O Lord God!"

If from the preaching of the apostles we turn to their epistles,—where we have the substance of their preaching fully recorded —are not these replete with the doctrine of the cross? Attend to the delineation which St. Paul gives of the subject, the character, and the purpose of the ministry of himself and his fellows,—“All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” And is *this* the Gospel? Is this the blessed negociation which the plenipotentiaries of heaven are commis-

sioned to carry on in a perishing world ? How then can *he* discharge his trust who does not hold forth the overtures of reconciliation to every one that hath an ear to hear ? Once more, let the apostle tell us what was the tenor of his ministry ? “ I determined,” saith he, “ not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.” And again, “ We preach Christ crucified to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness ; but to them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men ; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” From the last passage it is clear that St. Paul foresaw that the preaching of Christ would prove to many who heard it a stumbling-block and rock of offence. Yet did he not, therefore, withhold the Gospel. On the contrary, he elsewhere expresses himself in these awful words,—“ Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in

Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place, for we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are a savour of life unto life, and to the other a savour of death unto death, and who is sufficient for these things ?" This witness is clear. How can it be gainsayed that the apostle exulted in having been enabled to "make manifest the savour of Christ" even where it proved "a savour of death unto death !" Solemn, yet instructive, lesson ! It is ours to deliver the message with which we are charged—the consequences are wholly with God.

In order, however, to ward off, or at least enfeeble the force of such passages as those which we have adduced, and which might be multiplied a hundredfold, the Tracts to which we are referring have recourse to a strange expedient. They represent St. Paul, in all the expressions which he is ever using touching "Christ

crucified," "the cross of Christ," "the death of Christ,"—as having only a remote reference to the Atonement; his immediate reference being to our conformity to the Saviour. Their reasoning is as follows: "It will be evident on a little attention, that when St. Paul thus speaks, it is not the atonement and divinity of the blessed Lord which he brings forward, although *it is implied in that saying*" Now these words of course imply "the Atonement," as a life-giving principle contained in them; but it is a great mistake to suppose that they contain nothing more, or that by preaching the atonement, we are preaching what St. Paul meant by Christ crucified. It may be seen by an attention to the context in all the passages where these expressions occur, that it is a very different view, and in fact the opposite to the modern notion, which St. Paul always intends by it. It is the necessity of our being crucified to the world; it is our humiliation together with

him,—mortification of the flesh—being made conformable to his sufferings and to his death If the doctrine of the atonement is conveyed in the expression of Christ crucified, as used by St. Paul, it is by teaching at the same time the necessity of our mortification, which is repugnant to opinions now received. . . .

The cross of Christ which St. Paul preached, was that by which the world was crucified to him, and he was crucified to the world, “bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.” And precisely the same was the teaching of our blessed Lord also. His own humiliation and the necessity of our humiliation together with Him, was the doctrine signified by the cross which He put forth, and inculcated on the multitude in distinction from that of his own divinity, and our salvation through the same, which He rather kept secret.*

In all this there is much of mystification

* Tract 80, pp. 74, 75.

and unfairness. No doubt St. Paul inculcated conformity to Christ,—fellowship with him in his death, his resurrection, and his ascension—that with him we should die to sin, with him rise again unto righteousness, and with him ascend in hope and heart to heaven. This however, is not the point in debate. The question is, whether the apostle enforced conformity to Christ *as antecedent to acceptance in Christ*,—as preparatory to the knowledge of his atonement ; or, rather, as consequent upon justification—as springing out of faith in Christ's blood. We may safely leave the determination of this point to any simple, devout student of the Gospel. Nothing is more evident throughout the epistles than that the latter, not the former, is the method pursued by the Holy Spirit. Could it indeed be otherwise? Does not reason itself tell us that if the obedience which God will accept must be the obedience of the heart, and if the obedience of the heart must be the obedience of love,—then, in order that God may be loved by our ali-

enated, guilty, and mistrustful hearts, his love in Christ towards us must first be apprehended by them? It is this which slays the enmity of the carnal mind, displaces the spirit of bondage by the spirit of adoption, and wins the affections back to God. Such is the scriptural mode of restoring man to the favour and image of his Maker. "We love him," says St. John, "because *he first loved us.*" And again he declares,—"We have known and believed the love of God towards us;" and when he would inculcate brotherly love it is thus he reasons—"In this was manifest the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." And, once more, he adds,—"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." Here is no disguise. Nor is the language of St. Paul

less explicit. When he lays bare the main-spring of all the zeal, devotedness, and endurance of himself and his fellow labourers, he thus writes,—“The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if Christ died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”

But where should we pause were we to bring forward a seventh part of the texts which serve to show that the Scriptures represent the atonement made for us by Christ, as the grand demonstration of the divine love; and *that love*, as the great foundation of our faith in God; and *that faith*, “working by love,” as the great spring of all obedience—the source and the soul of holiness? Without, then, further multiplying quotations, let us proceed to test, very briefly, the wisdom of preaching the Atonement, by ascertaining the efficacy of such preaching, in the past and in the present history of the church. To its

power in apostolic times we have already adverted. It was not so much by preaching the religion of nature, or, the law of God, that the apostles brought such multitudes to salvation ; but, inculcating rather, by holding forth the death of Christ upon the cross, thus verifying the prediction of their Master,—“And I if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.” Nor is the fact less significant that no sooner was the apostolic method of preaching abandoned by the church, no sooner was that reserve in the communication of christian knowledge, which we are now called upon to resume, practised by the ministers of Christ—no sooner was the unscriptural distinction between “esoteric and exoteric” doctrine introduced, than the progress of the Gospel was arrested, and the vitality of Christianity evaporated. Cumbrous ceremonial and gorgeous superstition took the place of spiritual worship and enlightened godliness. How dark the night of ignorance, immorality, and despotism which

ensued, you need not be reminded. And as it was with the decline of the preaching of the cross that living godliness declined, so it was with the revival of the one that the other revived. What was the grand lever which Wickliffe, and Ridley, and Latimer, and Luther, and Calvin, employed in raising the church of Christ from its degradation, and in overturning the power of the Papacy?—It was the proclamation of pardon through the blood of Christ,—justification through faith, and faith only. And wilfully blind must that man be who dares to deny that the result of their preaching was a return to genuine holiness as well as to evangelical truth. At the present day, as in past times, it is the same kind of preaching which is owned of God, whether in the church at home or in pagan lands abroad. To the former we have referred somewhat largely in a previous discourse, we shall now therefore dwell only on the latter. The labours of the Moravian missionaries

in Greenland furnish one of the most interesting instances of what may be styled *an experimental trial* of the mode of teaching which God will bless. In the outset, and for a lengthened period, they adopted the plan which is so much advocated now. They dwelt upon the being and attributes of God. They strove to move the heathen by moral reasoning, and by the terrors of the law. But no satisfactory results ensued. When at length, however, they were led by providential circumstances to set forth the love of Christ in dying for sinners and the great salvation freely offered to all, then many a heart, which had been cold and hard as the icebergs of the country, was thawed into tenderness, contrition, and love. And Greenland, at this moment, stands out a lovely ensample of the power of the preaching of the cross.

Many similar exemplifications of our argument might be brought forward, but we shall content ourselves with adducing

the touching testimony of a converted North American Indian, whose language expresses what no language but his own could express. Speaking of the best means of christianizing the heathen, he said,—“ Brethren, I have been a heathen myself, and have grown old amongst them ; I therefore know their modes of thinking. A preacher once came to us, desiring to instruct us ; and began by proving to us that there was a God. On which we said to him, ‘ Well, and dost thou think we are ignorant of that ? Go back to the place whence thou camest.’ Then again another preacher came, and began to instruct us saying, ‘ You must not steal or become inebriated, or tell falsehoods, or lead abandoned lives.’ We answered him, ‘ Thinkest thou that we know not that ? Go, and practically learn these things thyself, and then teach them to thine own people ; for who are more addicted to such vices than they ?’ Thus we sent him away also. At length a mis-

sionary came to my hut, and sat down by me. The contents of his discourse were nearly these: 'I come to thee in the name of the Lord of heaven and earth. He sends me to acquaint thee that he would gladly save thee, and make thee happy, and deliver thee from the miserable condition in which thou at present liest. To this end he became man, gave his life a ransom for man, and shed his blood for man. All that believe in the name of this Jesus obtain the forgiveness of sins. To all that receive him by faith, he giveth power to become the sons of God. The Holy Spirit dwelleth in their hearts; and they are made free through the blood of Christ, from the slavery and dominion of sin. And though thou art the chief of sinners, yet, if thou prayest the Father in his name, and believest in him as the sacrifice for thy sins, thou shalt be heard and saved, and he will give thee a crown of life, and thou shalt live with him for ever in heaven.' I could not," added the converted native, "I could

not forget his words, they constantly recurred to my mind. Even in sleep I dreamed of the blood which Christ shed for us. 'If, then,' continued he, 'you would have your words gain an entrance among the heathen, preach to them Christ Jesus, his blood, his sufferings, and his death.' How touchingly true, how deeply instructive, this testimony of a simple child of nature, become a heaven-taught child of God! Well might the Saviour rejoice in spirit and say, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

What shall we more say? May we not make our appeal to the records of the church in every age and in every land? Wherever and whenever Christ has been exalted as a Saviour, pardon through his blood—full, free, plenteous pardon—has been proclaimed,—there God has given

testimony to the word of his grace ; there life has filled the church ; there God has added unto it continually such as should be saved. But wherever and whenever the doctrines of the cross have been suppressed, compromised, or obscured ;—there light has waned, godliness languished, and the Holy Spirit been restrained.

If then, men and brethren, these things be so,—“take heed what ye hear.” Christ has in these words, not only authorized, but enjoined you to prove what is preached to you. See to it, therefore, that the Gospel which you hear be not a reserved, sophisticated, or distorted Gospel. Thank God ! the low as well as the high, the unlearned as well as the erudite, may exercise their judgment in this matter ; for, having in their hands the word of God in the vulgar tongue, they can bring what they hear to the test of that sure touchstone. Happily, with the Scriptures so universally spread amongst us, and, by the blessed appointment of our church, so in-

cessantly read in our sanctuaries, it seems almost impossible that such notions as those which we have been exposing should gain much currency amongst us. No marvel then that the men who advocate such opinions should speak slightly and mistrustfully of the profuse distribution of the word of God, and the dissemination of religious tracts, as if all this were little better than "giving that which is holy unto dogs and casting our pearls before swine." But beloved, "ye have not so learned Christ." Therefore, "let no man deceive you with vain words."

On the other hand, however, take heed that you do not rest in what you hear, and turn the grace of God into licentiousness. The doctrine of the atonement may be, has been, fearfully abused. Indeed, what doctrine has not been perverted! If we were to give up every truth of revelation which the depraved heart of man has misused, we must give up holy Scripture altogether. The rather, however, beware that

you give no handle to those who misconceive and misrepresent your faith. Vindicate your principles by your practice. "Adorn the doctrine of *God Our Saviour* in all things." Remember, that if Christ be made of God to you righteousness, he will also be made to you sanctification. Remember, that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Remember, that "he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." God grant, that whilst you count all things but dung that you may win Christ, and be found in him, not having your own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; you may, at the same time, know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means you may attain unto the resurrection of the dead." God grant that we may be able to say of

you, "Ye are our epistles written in our hearts, known and read of all men."

Let us again bless God for the soundness in the faith of our beloved church. On the vital subject which we have been discussing her voice is clear as the sound of the silver trumpet. In her second article she thus teaches : "The Son, which is the word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance : so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very man ; who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt but also for the actual sins of men." No less decisive is the language of her thirteenth article :—" Works done before the grace of Christ, and the

inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school-authors say,) deserve grace of congruity: yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." If from the Articles we turn to the Homilies, how overwhelming the testimony which they bear. We must quote the entire "sermon of the salvation of mankind by only Christ our Saviour from sin and death everlasting," were we to do justice to their teaching. We must, therefore, content ourselves with stating, that it is difficult to conceive of a more broad, bold, undisguised exhibition of the Atonement than that contained in this admirable Homily. Of the tone of the Book of Common Prayer we can only give a single instance. In the order for the visitation of the sick, the minister is instructed thus to address

the dying man:—"The Almighty Lord, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow down and obey, be now and evermore thy defence; and make thee know and feel, that there is none other name under heaven given to man, in whom, and through whom, thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Beautiful summary of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God! Alas, that any of the sons of our church should forsake the steps and gainsay the teaching of their venerable mother!

To wind up the whole, we would, with fresh confidence and joy, invite all of you who have an ear to hear and a heart to receive the overtures of mercy—"be ye reconciled to God." Doubt not but earnestly believe that God is more ready to receive you than you can be to return to Him, and to be at peace with you than you can be to be at peace with

Him. Tarry not, therefore, but leave all, rise up, and go unto your Father. While the prodigal “was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him, and said, this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found.” “Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

THE END.

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CONTENTS.

OF VOL. II.

SERMON.

- VIII. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.**
- IX. THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.**
- X. SIN AFTER BAPTISM.**
- XI. THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.**
- XII. FASTING AND VOLUNTARY HUMILITY.**
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